

Bi Women

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network

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COMING OUT



As the proverbial groundhog prepares to come out of its burrow, BBWN members reflect on their own coming out stories...

PARENTS: A WHOLE OTHER KARMA

by Marcia Deihl

I write my parents a letter, usually on Fridays, and they write me, one to a side, on typewriter paper, usually on Mondays. It's immediately clear whose side is whose. Dad is mostly right brain: feelings, fantasies, memories, some plans. Mother's side is what birds have appeared at her feeder, and family illnesses and gossip. Both of them send surreal comics from the paper, often the same ones I have just sent them. They both write about what Great Books they're reading, often with some theological or feminist comment thrown in. Mother's always getting in trouble for

speaking her mind at her "salon," where a few friends come over every Friday night for "Washington Week in Review" and discuss it over her sherbet and boxed cookies. Lancaster, Pennsylvania is not Cambridge; they often have conservative friends from church, and appar-

ently the discussion can get rather dicey. How I'd love to be there! If they would dare have me.

One of Dad's recent letters read, "Dearest Marcia: It must have been hard for you to write and send copy that confirms your coming out to your parents. I'm glad you did. It changes but can never change our love for you. Dad."

What! 'Come out?' Hadn't I already come out to them years ago?

They are nearing eighty, so . . . maybe they forgot?? Yeah, sure. I had been sending them my published articles for years. Articles with titles like "Biphobia" and "Moving Beyond Binary Thinking" in recently published books and jour-

Coming Out continues on page 4

Northeastern Bisexual Community Meeting Planned for April

As bisexuals, our community is constantly changing because of our own emerging needs, our growing pride in our self-identity and our rallying together as a community around this pride. In the face of constant attacks by conservative factions, negative stereotyping in the media and continuing invisibility in mainstream and queer communities it's important we begin a dialogue as bisexuals in the northeast region. Laura Marina Perez and Stephanie Berger, the Northeastern regional representatives of BiNet USA, are in the beginning stages of organizing a Northeastern community meet-

Bi Meeting continues on page 3



Volunteers of the Month

Thanks to all the women who have helped the network by staffing the Bi Office, working on the newsletter, stuffing envelopes, making phone calls, going to meetings . . .

Lynne J. ♀ Laura Perez ♀ Sharon G. ♀ Stephanie Berger ♀
Claire M. ♀ Robyn Ochs ♀ Linda Blair ♀ Ann Goglia ♀ Debbie
Block ♀ Johanna A. ♀ Kathrine Douthit ♀ Laura Sachs ♀
Kathleen ♀ Susan S.
and all those unsung heras who aren't listed.
You are appreciated. Thank you.

BiWomen is published bi-monthly.

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(*Go, Team, Go!!!*)
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DEADLINE for the April/May issue:

Friday, March 11, 1993

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or hand-written) or on floppy disk (PC or Mac), and include a name and phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published, please tell us! Otherwise we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. **You may contribute anonymously, or just use your first name, if you wish.**

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140

The FOCUS of the April/May issue:

Bi Art and Bi Artists!

Start thinking **now** about sending in your art, or your thoughts on bi art and bi artists.

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Letters

To Whom it May Concern,

This letter is an outcry, to establish contact with other bisexual people.

I recently left my 10 year relationship with another woman and am now seeing a man again. Before this 10 year monogamous relationship I was in an open relationship with a man. My lesbian friends are now in shock, my straight friends are in shock and I am in shock as well. I have always felt that someone's sex is not the main reason to love a person or not, but my support systems make me feel I need to "commit".

Please send me your newsletter from the Boston Bisexual Women's Network and any other information to raise my consciousness and to give me a chance to share. I wonder if I am the only fish nor fowl around.

I would love to get to a place where I can say: Proud to be bi!

Thank you so much.
Monique

BBWN Financial Statement

January 1 through December 31, 1993

Balance forward: 1/1/93 \$ 2392.00

EXPENSES

March (inc. merchandise purchased for sale)	1333.93
Printing	1593.78
Postage	982.90
Supplies	35.65
Space rental	40.00
Advertisement	50.00
Bank fees	10.00

Total Expenses: 4085.26

INCOME

Dues	2599.00
Advertising	175.00
Merchandise	2548.00
Brunch	221.00
Bank interest	51.13
Total Income:	5594.53

Balance as of 12/31/94 3901.27

Note: There was an error in the 9/30/93 Financial Statement as published in last issue of BiWomen (Dec. 1993/Jan. 1994). The above numbers cover the entire calendar year and are correct.

Bi Meeting, from page 1

ing for all bisexuals, our allies and friends. The aim of the regional community meeting is to share resources, support and network within our states and regions in order to break down our individual and collective isolation as bisexuals. This meeting will also serve to teach and learn from each other in order to organize in our local communities. Lastly, information will be available about BiNet and the larger emerging national bisexual movement.

The purpose of BiNet, the National Bisexual Network, which formed under a different name in 1990, is threefold: 1) to collect and distribute information regarding Bisexuality and to facilitate the development of Bisexual community and visibility; 2) to work for the equal rights and liberation of Bisexuals and all oppressed peoples; and 3) to work to eradicate all forms of oppression inside and outside the Bisexual community.

During the third national meeting of BiNet, organizers established nine regions in the United States in order to promote local organizing and more coherent regional voices. BiNet has members, elected delegates and local affiliated groups across the country. Each region has two representatives elected by their region, with a goal of attaining racial and gender parity. As representatives of the Northeast region, made up of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and Rhode Island we, Stephanie and Laura, would like to introduce ourselves as such.

As facilitators of this meeting our purpose is to not to tell you what needs to be done in your community, but to act as resources—a clearinghouse of information, materials and contacts. One of the main purposes of this gathering is to help initiate a dialogue amongst ourselves as bisexual organizers, those just coming out or questioning their sexual orientation, emerging leaders and long time activists. We envision addressing more general issues and specific issues that each of us will bring to the table that day. When thinking about this meeting, we came up with several ideas that could be discussed such as: breaking down the isolation many of us feel as bisexuals, the strategies and struggles of urban and rural organizing, how to set up support groups as well as networks in one's area, networking strategies and support for people of color, support for married peoples and those in "alternative" relationships, coming out issues, addressing the anti-oppression work that needs to be done within the bisexual community, AIDS/HIV and so on.

This is just a partial list of possible areas of discussion that we brainstormed, and not necessarily the definitive list of topics. Our hope is to assist other bisexuals in assessing what the needs are in their own communities and struc-

ture the meeting around that.

The current structure for the day we have developed involves open dialogue, facilitated smaller group discussions and working groups and work plans for the future. We are also looking at caucus time for a variety of groups such as rural communities, individual states, women, people of color, young people, drag/transgendered people, older people, people with disabilities, people with AIDS and you get the picture. A small donation will also be requested to help cover administrative costs like stamps and phone bills, as well as food, possibly space rental and ASL interpreters; however, no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

This meeting obviously can't happen with just the two of us. Keep in mind a regional meeting of this nature has not yet occurred in the Northeast before, and there's much to be done. There are a wide range of ways you can get involved from just showing up to, as an individual or organization, sponsoring the meeting in your town. Even if you only have a few hours between now and April there's ways you can make this a reality. Some of the immediate high priority task are: advertising and outreach in your area, site contact and liaison, childcare coordinator, and ASL interpretation coordinator.

We are also in the process of contacting all interested folks in order to mobilize bisexuals in their specific areas and to help pin down a location. We're hoping to set up a location in Vermont preferably the Brattleboro area either the weekend of April 16th or April 30th. (Stay tuned for confirmation). The meeting will be a one day event with a possible brainstorming session that evening for all interested. If you live in any of these areas or are interested in getting involved in this effort in any way whatsoever, PLEASE contact either Laura (617) 282-3537 or Stephanie (617) 666-3149. Thanks a bunch. Hoping to hear from you all real soon.

—Stephanie Berger and
Laura Marina Perez

Speak Out!

Write to your newsletter! Send us your letters, poetry, opinions, questions, essays, art, jokes, praise, criticism, news clippings . . .

▼

BiWomen

BBWN

P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA
02140



VEGETARIANS WANTED

I'm looking for biwomen (and their partners, spouses, friends, etc) who are committed vegetarians for discussion, socializing, and possible cooking group.

Pen Pals are also welcome. Contact:

Debbie Block
79 Winthrop Road
Brookline, MA 02146
(617) 731-9060

COLORADO COURT DECLARES ANTI-GAY AMENDMENT 2 UNCONSTITUTIONAL

(New York, NY, December 14, 1993) In a strong affirmation of lesbian and gay civil rights, a Colorado trial court today invalidated Amendment 2, the anti-gay initiative passed by Colorado voters over a year ago, and blocked it from ever taking effect in the state of Colorado.

Ruling in *Evans v. Romer*, Judge Jeffrey Bayless declared unconstitutional the initiative which would have amended Colorado's constitution to prohibit any state entity from outlawing discrimination against lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. Since the passage of Amendment 2, similar battles over anti-gay initiatives have raged in at least nine states around the country. Indeed, on November 16th, Lambda Legal Defense's won a challenge to Cincinnati's anti-gay charter amendment in an Ohio federal court, which decided the amendment should be blocked. It is expected that Colorado will appeal the ruling to the state's supreme court.

—Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund

Coming Out, from page 1

nals. Articles about how Robyn Ochs and I had co-founded the Boston Bisexual Women's Network. Letters full of my work with the Cambridge Lavender Alliance and my recent baptism by fire on the successful campaign for the first out lesbian to run for Cambridge City Council. The exciting news that my articles on bisexuality had recently been accepted by *Ms.* and the *Harvard Review*. Of course, Dad had been a staunch civil rights advocate—that's partially why he had been "let go" from his parish in the early seventies—but he wasn't Black. Therefore, Marcia didn't necessarily have to be gay. Well, I guess they were half right.

The week before, high on the up-curve of my writer's narcissistic mania, I had sent them a draft of my Cambridge memoirs, waiting for their usual rave reviews. It was set in the 1970s, including the behind-the-scenes stories of my six-year women's band, the New Harmony Sisterhood. Nothing they hadn't seen before... Ah, wait a minute, this time I'd included Kit's note from my *I'm Settled* party. Kit's note had said that 1) she was hurt that I was "settled" without her, as if she had meant nothing in my life; and 2) she hoped that I had a good party and she wished me well. She had been my lover for two years. But how could they not have guessed that before?

Yes, I had cut out most of the sexy parts from their editions of my writings, not to mention confused them with boyfriends from then on, especially my still-malingering widow's weeds for the Jack affair. Then I remembered my lyrics and how coy they really were. "I'm Settled" was a vague "I'm OK" statement for all unmarried women. No reason given for this cryptic cowgirl's independence, nothing about sexuality or artist's temperament, no hint of why I "wanted to be alone." In the late 1970s, feminist pride was enough of an explanation. Feminists loved it, my divorced cousin J'Ann loved it, even happily married people loved it and sang along each time I asked: "No hubby, no house, no car, no kid/And no regrets for what I didn't or I did..." No one questioned its glib self-congratulatory tone, perhaps because they knew of another bat-

tered wife who was leaving her marriage or another happily single bohemian woman who was turning thirty.

Lesbians loved it most of all, because they knew I was one of them. I was, but even as I wrote the song, I was confused and torn. Behind the scenes was another story, my story of sexual limbo, which I had the shyness and good Protestant breeding not to put into the lyrics. When I threw that birthday party in the summer of 1979 right after my breakup with Kit, it must have been a stab in her heart. There was no other woman, or man. Just me. Recovery and my amends, then six years of inner renovations before trying again—yes, with a man.

What was different this time was my naming of who the "she" was, and that she was not just my friend. They had to know eventually and this was it. A test of their previous unconditional love—perhaps one of the hardest for a parent. They loved Kit and knew her well, but as my best friend. They even know she now lives with Janet and in what capacity. It must have been a little death for them, the death of the image of their dear Little (hetero) Marcia. And I had gone and forced them to go back to their old images of my dear friend, their favorite, and reluctantly replay their video of our visits over the years, our van, and my "I'm Settled" party. Everything would take on an added cast, one that they didn't like. I don't blame them. I don't like to think of them "doing it" either and I doubt they enjoyed this new X-rated inner video. But if they did, that was their video, not mine. My memories are not "dirty," and there's the rub. Many lesbian, gay, and bisexual writers celebrate their passion and lust; for me it was more the cultural, emotional, and political keys that opened my beloved renegade mirror world. Keys that I still have today. If my parents think it was all about sex, I will live with that irony.

Dad says he is a "self-avowed" homophobe because once, in the Navy, some guy made a pass as him and he got all flummoxed. It made him sick, he said. At least he's honest.

"Dad," I said, "You can just say no. Like women have had to do through the ages. And if he's bigger than you, hey, that's what us gals have always had to live with too."

"Hmmmm..." he had said.

But he tries, for me. A few years ago he told me excitedly that he had invited a Homosexual to speak at their church men's breakfast. The man was "very nice," and had even stayed over with my parents. They sounded like he was the only gay man who had ever come to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. But I was happy and told him how proud of him I was. Then I found out that this man was from a group of ex-gays who go around saying they've been "cured" by Christian conver-

Coming Out continues on next page

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Coming Out, from preceding page

sion, and they travel around speaking their message. What? All I could think of was the image of some guy hitting himself over the head. Ah, poor me, poor Dad, poor guy.

"It changes but can never change our love for you." What was he saying? I hoped he meant the flavor was changed, but not the amount. Or perhaps the amount, but not the existence. Knowing Dad's mind is close to my own, his oxymoronic love statement could hold many embryonic meanings. He's often so poetically cryptic that I can feel comfortable with any of my interpretations, and I think he would allow them.

Mother's note said that she'd figured it out from my bookshelves when she had visited me by herself ten years ago. I suppose it's about time that they both knew Chapter One of the story behind "I'm Settled." They know all of the others. Never write a song in your twenties that gets well-known—it will follow you for the rest of your life. A few days after Dad's note arrived, I got their Christmas card, the year in review on a three-by-five postcard. Enclosed with their letter and my card was a card to forward to Kit, addressed "To you and yours." Do you see why I am in love with my folks?

My paternal grandmother Edna, a well-known children's book author, and also a women's club member, pianist, music critic, and wife and mother of six during the Great Depression, wrote in her dairy:

October 3, 1934: Irving [my father] is a wonderful character. So are they all. They are idealists, one and all, and it sometimes is difficult to be the mother of idealists, [yet] I thank God he has answered my prayers and made them as they are. They are all extremists now, but they are young, and should be about right at thirty or forty.

I'm forty-four and they're eighty. We're gettin' there. ▼

Bisexual Pride T-Shirts!!

For just \$15 (or \$14 if you come to the Bi Office) you get a Bisexual Pride t-shirt in black or deep purple sizes small to xx-large.

Please indicate size and color with order. Make check out to BBWN and send to:

**BBWN, attn. Stephanie/T-shirts,
95 Berkeley St., Suite 613, Boston,
MA 02116.**

Order NOW!

COMING OUT STORIES

by Robyn Ochs

As far as I'm concerned, the hardest thing about coming out is finding a way to bring up the subject. I have spent years unsuccessfully trying to think of smooth transitional lines. "Yes, mom, your new haircut looks just beautiful. And, by the way, speaking of bisexuality, which we weren't, I am. Grandma, would you please pass the salt?" I can think of so many occasions, when I was finally ready to tell, that I didn't, because I couldn't think of a way to bring it up.

Responses to my coming out have been many and varied. A few have been painful and difficult, but without exception, all of my experiences have been far easier than my worst fears, illustrating again and again my tendency to underestimate my loved ones.

Just two of my many coming out stories:

MY MOM (in a car on my 24th birthday—don't worry, I was driving)

ME: Mom, there's something I need to tell you about myself. I'm bisexual.

MOM: Oh, I've known that for a long time.

ME: But mom, how did you know?

MOM: Well, when you showed up at that folk festival last year on a motorcycle with that friend of yours with the REALLY short hair, I kind of had an idea. As probably did everyone else who saw you that day.

ME: If you knew, why didn't you say anything?

MOM: Why didn't YOU say anything?

ME: I was scared you would reject me or be upset.

MOM: I want you to be happy. My only concern is that I am afraid you are choosing difficult path, and I don't want to see you get hurt.

MOM: (later) Please don't tell your brothers.

They are just starting to form their own sexualities and I don't want them to be even more confused than they already probably are.

ONE BROTHER (a year later in my kitchen while he was visiting)

ME: David, there's something we need to talk about which I'm having a hard time figuring out how to bring up. My last relationship was with a woman. You see, I'm bisexual.

HIM: I already knew that.

ME: You DID?

Coming Out continues on next page



INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY OF BISEXUAL GROUPS NOW AVAILABLE

The 1994 edition of the International Directory of Bisexual Groups is hot off the press. This issue has over 100 new listings and includes bisexual and lesbian/gay/bisexual groups in 18 countries and over 40 US states. You can get your own copy by sending \$5 to BRC, PO Box 639, Cambridge MA 02140.

Advertise in BiWomen!

For only \$10 per issue, your message will reach over 700 subscribers. Save \$5 and advertise in three issues for \$25.

Send your business-card sized ad or personal ad (50 words or less) and a check (to BBWN) to:

**BiWomen, c/o
BBWN, P.O. Box 639,
Cambridge, MA
02140**

Such a deal!

Embattled lesbians in Mississippi

Sister Spirit, a feminist center on a farm in Ovett, Mississippi, just outside Hattiesburg, is under siege from a right-wing fundamental group called the Christian Ministers Association, which is seeking to drive Sister Spirit from the region. CMA has undertaken a hate campaign, complete with threatening calls.

Some 20 women have assembled as a protection force at Ovett. The local CBS station in Hattiesburg (WDAM) has featured their plight twice, with strong support from WDAM broadcaster Bob Noonan. Recently, ABC's 20/20 ran a very supportive story about them.

This is a volatile scene. Please use any networks you have to rally support for Sister Spirit. Their phone number is 601-344-1411 (Brenda and Wanda Hanson). WDAM number is 601-544-4730. You can reach the Christian Ministers Association via Pastor Ray Thornton, Good Hope Baptist Church, Stinger, MS 610-428-0921.

These women are natives of Mississippi. People constantly ask them, "Why don't you go to San Francisco or New York to organize this kind of thing?"

"Because we're from Mississippi and because we're needed here desperately," they explain.

First they ran a feminist bookstore for about 4 years in Gulfport, but they found they were mainly doing a crisis center, not a book-selling operation. So they bought the property for a good deal outside Ovett. They do rape-crisis counseling, help battered or all sorts, run a food bank, provide hospice for PWAs....

- from e-mail sources

Coming Out, from preceding page

HIM: Yeah, weren't you involved with that girl who lived in your dorm?

ME: No, but I was certainly attracted to her. She was the first woman I had a crush on.

HIM: Oh, I thought you were in a relationship.

ME: No, I was too scared. I was just starting to come out to myself. I never even told her I was attracted to her.

HIM: Oh, I do have one question. You say it's no big deal, but if it's really no big deal, why did you wait so many years to tell me?

ME: Because I was scared you would reject me.

HIM: I feel kind of hurt that you didn't trust me. You know you underestimated me.

ME: You're right, I did. I owe you an apology.

Of course, it wasn't all that simple. He later asked me not to mention it in front of his friends. And one night years later he said that he still feels kind of uncomfortable with my bisexuality. If I were a lesbian, he said, he could be clear in his mind that that's just the way I am, that I have no choice. But my bisexuality makes him uncomfortable, because in his mind I DO have a choice, and it makes him uncomfortable because he feels I am choosing not to be straight. I explained to him that while am very content being bisexual, I did not wake up one day and say I think I'll be bisexual now—for me coming to a bisexual identity was not a choice, but rather a discovery.

This brother did me the service of coming out for me to most of my family. I suggested that he respond, when anyone asked, "Does Robyn have a boyfriend?" "No, she has a girlfriend."

I have tried many other coming out strategies as well. The easiest by far were my appearances in the national media, including Newsweek (1987) and the Donohue Show (1993). Using this method, I was able to come out to millions of strangers (and some friends, coworkers and family members) in one fell swoop. But of course this strategy may not be ideal for everyone.

Advice? Trust people's intelligence. Give people time to come to terms with the information you are giving them—don't expect them to unlearn a lifetime's worth of misinformation about bisexuality and homosexuality in one evening. And finally, make it clear to the people whom you are coming out to that you are very interested in answering any questions they might have about being bisexual, what it means to you personally, and why you chose to come out to them. ▶

IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS

Bi Laura Sachs (© Jan. 1994)

First in a three-part series

One sunny Sunday morning I came downstairs to find my older brother David and his girlfriend Karen sitting around the kitchen table. They had just finished a sumptuous brunch of fresh toasted bagels with cream cheese, lox, honey, butter and jam. After getting a place setting I noticed that fruit salad, orange juice, tea and coffee were also placed on the table.

Karen looked up from the paper and said, "Good morning." Then she went back to reading what appeared to be the business section. My brother also glanced up when I sat down. "How you doing?" He asked, taking a sip of juice.

"Not bad, thanks. Not bad." I replied, "a bit sleepy though."

My brother went back to reading the paper while I snagged a bagel half. While spreading the cream cheese on the bagel I quietly observed the two of them. They were both wearing pajamas and bathrobes. David had been going out with her for two months before he even mentioned her existence. Then periodically she would show up for dinner.

Now, just two months after my father's famous, "This is your house too, and if you wish to enjoy the privacy of your bedroom you may—just don't get her pregnant," speech to my brother, Karen was staying over weekends and sleeping in my brother's room.

I picked up the funnies and joined David and Karen in relaxing and listening to the droning air conditioner. We were enjoying each other's company. Everything was fine until David got upset about the article he was reading.

"Listen to this!" he exclaimed and began reading aloud about a young gay man in Providence, Rhode Island, who took another gay man to his high school prom.

I was fascinated because I had never heard of gays or lesbians going proms and intrigued because in the past few years I had been investigating my own sexual identity. I had acknowledged to myself that I was attracted to women and men and was bisexual, but I had never discussed this with my family.

I paid attention surreptitiously while my brother continued reading. I got more and more excited as I listened to the story unfold and thought how brave the young man was for having the courage to go public about himself. As David finished reading I was feeling really thrilled inside and was smiling on the outside. I was really happy until my brother reacted to the story.

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Coming Out, from preceding page

"What jerks! And screwed up!" He proclaimed. "I can't believe a guy would do something like this! They're a disgrace to themselves and their families! Complete idiots! Screwed up idiots!"

I was stunned by the vehemence of my brother's reaction and felt my stomach go numb to hear him being so critical and enraged. My heart sped up and I realized that I was holding my breath. I exhaled and took a few quick breaths to help myself calm down before I tried to respond.

I tried to reason with him. "You know, Dave, I don't think what this guy's done is such a big deal. He just happens to have a different sexual orientation than you do, that's all."

"He's a moron! He's screwed up!" My brother responded scornfully. "He has no respect for himself or his family! How could he put them through something as embarrassing as this?"

"Brilliant utterances from my brother the moron!" I thought to myself. "Don't you realize you're yelling about your own sister, you jackass!" Thankfully he couldn't hear my thoughts.

"Dave, please listen to me." I tried to reply calmly, to placate him, but inside my stomach muscles were knotting up. "The only difference between you and him is your sexual orientation. The prom is a really important event in a person's life and he wants to bring someone he really cares about. What's the harm in that? Isn't that what you did?" I reached over to touch my brother's arm.

He yanked his arm away and turned so that he was fully facing me. "This guy is a fuck-up and has no respect for his family! He's queer!" By the vitriolic way my brother responded, I realized that he didn't mean "queer" as a slang term for a homosexual man. He was implying that the young man was psychologically ill and needed the treatment of a psychiatrist to "cure" him of his homosexuality.

I was furious with my brother's lack of understanding. Like people who assume that if they raise the volume of what they're saying to someone who doesn't understand English, that person will then understand, I began yelling back at my brother. "You just don't get it, do you? He's not crazy, sick or queer the way you mean! Please hear me, the only difference between the two of you is your sexual orientation! That's it!"

David smugly looked at me. "How do you know?" He demanded, shoving his finger in my face.

"Because I'm bisexual!" I snapped, leaning back and karate blocking his finger out of my face.

My brother stared back at me as if I'd just smacked him in the face with a wet fish.

"Oh my God," I thought, as my guts collapsed. "I said it."

I could never, ever put that word back in my mouth. It was too late. My anger had completely obliterated my usual internal censorship mechanism.

Karen, who had ignored the two of us the entire time we were yelling at each other, chose the moment I uttered the "B" word to come out of hiding. The top half of the newspaper she was holding dropped and she stared at me across the table.

I flippantly blurted out the first words that came to mind. "Don't worry, I'm not going to come chasing after you!" She never said a word, just pulled the top of the paper back up in front of her face.

"How do you know you're bisexual?" My brother asked incredulously.

I turned to face him. "I've never had a relationship with a man or a woman or slept with anyone of either sex, but I'm attracted to both. I know because it's how I feel and I've felt this way for as long as I can remember." I wished I'd had the presence of mind to ask him how he knew he was heterosexual. Before I could continue speaking, Karen put down the newspaper and got up from the table.

"I'm going upstairs," she announced. With a pointed look at my brother she walked out of the kitchen. While listening to her walk upstairs, I turned back to speak with my brother. He had gotten up and was clearing the table, stacking dishes together with a great deal of noise.

"David, please listen to me," I began, quietly urgent. "I know you weren't expecting me to tell you that I happen to be bisexual and I hope this hasn't changed anything. You're still my brother and I'm still your sister. If you have questions, please, PLEASE talk with me!" I followed him into the kitchen. He dropped the plates on the counter with a loud clatter and turned to face me, his back to the sink. I leaned against the wall oven. He was only five feet away, but he might as well have been on the other side of the Grand Canyon.

Coming Out continues on next page

BUTTONS

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Bisexual Queer



on sale at the Bi Office.

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Top Five Reasons to Come Out as a Bisexual Woman

5. For career enhancement, family approval, and attention from kinky guys (joke).

4. It's interactive. People will rarely yawn. There will be an exchange, you can be sure of that, unless they are incredibly polite (repressed).

3. Maybe it's my prejudice, but you will find lots of neat company. Many artists, anthropologists, not to mention many unsung accountants and computer nerds, are also bisexual. Any out bi has to become creative and self-accepting just by getting up in the morning and not lying. I never met a boring bisexual.

2. To engage in interesting political dialogue with lesbian comrades and your family (not a joke, unfortunately).

1. Because it's true. You are a child of the universe, you know all that "Desiderata" stuff. Let's get real. To the bigot: "Does my identity bother you? Is it hurting you? If you say, yes, no offense, but that's just plain dumb. I'm just waking up in the morning and walking around being me—I'm not existing AT YOU. I'm not making you be different, so don't do the same to me."

— Marcia Deihl

Coming Out, from preceding page

"I have nothing to say to you," he flatly replied, crossing his arms over his chest.

The sound of his voice gave him away. He wasn't telling me the truth and he was beginning to look hurt and angry. "I know you're still my sister, but you're right. I wasn't expecting to hear what you said a few minutes ago." He sounded disappointed.

I looked directly into his eyes. "Dave, I'm sorry if I've upset you or hurt your feelings. I know this wasn't expected and believe me I never planned to tell you in this fashion. But when you began to spout all that crap about the guy in Providence, I got so angry I couldn't take it anymore and had to tell you the truth!"

He didn't respond, just walked past me to finish clearing the table. I stood in the corner of the kitchen and watched him go back and forth a few times. He never looked at me. Trying to figure out what to say, I waited until he was done and finally said, "I know we'll discuss this when you're ready. Until we do however, I'd really, really appreciate it if you would not talk about this with Mom or Dad. I'll tell them when I'm ready. Okay?"

"Yeah. Okay," he slowly replied looking at me. "I'm going upstairs. I'll see you later." He walked out of the kitchen and shut the hallway door behind him.

I stood where I was for a minute, not really seeing anything. I sat down at the kitchen table and picked up the article to read it myself. I could see the words, but they had no meaning. I knew I was breathing but I couldn't feel my body moving. I was going numb again in the pit of my stomach. My face and thighs began to flush heat like a blast furnace, and I felt a sharp, stabbing pain above my left eyebrow, as I realized the gravity of what I had just done.

"It's ok, it's ok, it's ok," I told myself as I took a few deep breaths to relax. "You'll be fine, he'll come around," I heard myself say inside my head. I could feel my hands on the table and knew that I was coming back into my body.

No matter how tough life was or what problems I had, I'd always been able to talk with my dad. Based on our track record together, this wouldn't be any different—or would it be? My mother was another story. I glanced at my watch. It was 11:30. Dad would be done with rounds and home in two hours and it was time for Bugs Bunny. I turned on the television set just in time to catch Bugs in his classic bullfighting episode—one of my personal favorites. When I found myself belly laughing at Bugs' saying, "What an ultra maroon!" I knew everything would be okay. Smiling to myself, and taking another deep steady breathing, I waited for my father to come home.

A LETTER FROM COLORADO SPRINGS (A RECENT, TRUE STORY)

by Kathleen Hepburn

Dear Uncle Bob,

Merry Christmas! I hope this card finds you and Aunt Anny well and happy, and that the New Year brings peace and prosperity.

It's been a long time since we last spoke (5 years?). I'm doing well. I've been working at the Central Artery Project (a huge highway project here in Boston) for several years now. I'm a graphic designer there, and am very comfortable, although I am looking for more meaningful work these days.

In case your siblings haven't told you, I have found someone special to share my life with. Her name is Sue, and we've been together 3-1/2 years now. We're very happy. She's a graduate student at MIT, working on her Ph.D. in metallurgy. She's intelligent, warm, strong, and takes good care of me. I hope you can meet her someday. Perhaps this summer we'll find our way out to Colorado Springs.

Until then, best wishes and stay warm,

Love, Kathy



Dear Kathy and Sue,

Now I know we're way out here in God's Country, but to take 3-1/2 years to tell me you've found someone you can be happy with—shame on you, Kathy.

Sue, welcome, now you too must put up with my bad handwriting and spelling.

I do wish I could have been there when my dear sisters were informed of your and Sue's decision. I too shocked my family years ago. I didn't marry the person my family wanted me to, left home, re-joined the Army, married a German girl. It was years before Anny was accepted into the family.

So I can more or less relate to what the two of you must have gone through, with my side of the family anyhow.

I'm very happy you both feel for each other as you do (of course, I've only heard Kathy's side, ha ha).

The only free advice I can give you both is, "Be true to yourself, be true to each other."

It worked for us for the past 36 years.

Love to you both,
Uncle Bob



All Bi, MYSELF

by Kathrine Douthit

HEY, WOMEN in the CLOSET!

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OF CLOSETED LIFE !?!



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"THIS IS BIPHOBIC"
RUBBER STAMP!!

* HEH. HEH. HEH... NOT A REAL NUMBER

Artistic and Video Call

Stonewall 25: International March on the United Nations to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People is seeking submissions from the International Gay and Lesbian Community for the live artistic performances and video segments for The Rally, to be held on The Great Lawn of Central Park in New York City, immediately following The March.

Info:

Stephan Oxendine

MICHAEL McCURDY & ASSOCIATES, 242 West 27th Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10001-5926

(212) 366-1135 (Fax)



What they're saying out there...

From the February 1994 issue of *Vanity Fair*:

In an article entitled *Really Roseanne*, in which Roseanne Arnold is interviewed by writer Kevin Sessums:

"Considering your early history with all your lesbian fans, I was wondering if you'd ever had sex with other women," I say, testing her celebrated hyperhonesty. "I didn't have sex with none of them cow dykes and pool players, no," she says, cackling with abandon. "But, yes, I have done that.... The way I think about it is that anybody can have sex with anything. You're the one that's sexual. The person you're having it with doesn't do anything to make you one way or the other. You're the sexual person. If you want to go over there and have sex with that lamppost, you can do that too."

Also...

An article in *Utne Reader*, November/December 1993: *Queer in the streets, straight in the streets - notes on passing* by Village Voice senior editor Ann Powers. About the emergence of the "Queer Straight." Interesting...

Postmodernism has turned the closet inside out, making the projection of a queer attitude enough to claim a place in homosexual culture. Yet queer straights don't practice the fundamental acts of intimacy that ground homosexual identity. They are neither bisexual nor experimenting. They're not ambiguously defined companions of gay men, as were the fag hags of yore. Queer straights don't just hang around; what they do is pass. They carefully maneuver their rhetoric toward ambiguities of desire and display, leaving aside questions of the private. "We're the perfect couple," a friend with queer straight tendencies gushed. "Everyone thinks I'm a lesbian and everyone thinks Jake's gay." ▽

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Am I gay?

Am I straight?

Am I just confused?!?

COMING OUT AS BISEXUAL

Starting in February 1994, come join an open informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to women, men and others.

WHO is this group for exactly? Anyone who identifies as bisexual or thinks they are attracted to or interested in all genders (♀, ♂, ♂♀) and would like to have a space to talk about your concerns, fears and questions. The group will be facilitated by people who identify as bisexual and want to support others in their coming out process. You do not have to identify as bisexual in order to participate.

WHAT is this group about? This newly formed group's purpose is to create a supportive, safe environment for people who are questioning their sexual orientation and think they may be bisexual. This open and informal support group will discuss and explore the many issues and questions bisexuality raises.

WHERE does this group meet? We will meet at the Bisexual Resource Center's office at 95 Berkeley Street, Suite 613 in Boston's South End. This location is T accessible and wheelchair accessible.

WHEN does the group meet? COMING OUT AS BISEXUAL will meet the 1st and 3rd (and 5th) Wednesday of every month from 7-9 pm. This means February 2 and 16 and March 2, 16 and 30.

WHY even have this group? Right now, there is no specific introductory space for men, women and others to talk about the fact that they might not be gay or straight. There is an apparent need for a safe space to talk about what you may be feeling or thinking about your sexuality and what it may mean to see yourself as bisexual.

COMING OUT AS BISEXUAL is sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. A small donation will be requested, but is not required.

CALENDAR, *from page 12*

March 14 • Monday

BiWomen volunteer night. Type articles for the BiWomen newsletter, open the mail, make phone calls. REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED!! (Feel free to bring some, too...) Please come! 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Info: (617) 338-9595.

March 16 • Wednesday

BBWN working meeting. MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!! Continue to develop our important new programs (procedure manual, phone tree, etc.) See Feb. 16.

March 17 • Thursday

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. See Feb. 17. Topic: *Talking About Religion*.

March 19 • Saturday

Monthly Bi Brunch. 11am at Johnny D's, Holland St. in Davis Square (Davis T stop on Red line).

March 28 • Monday

BBWN newsletter stuffing volunteer night. Free anecdotes, gossip, unsolicited advice, jokes, fun! Help us get the newsletter out to those who need it. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Info: (617) 338-9595.

April 2 • Saturday

BBWN Brunch. Noon, at Kathleen's in Copley Square. See where the newsletter is produced! Shop in hoity-toity Back Bay after brunch! Directions: 236-5978.

Looking Ahead ...

June 10-12 • Friday-Sunday

Boston BiFest

June 11 • Saturday

Boston Pride

June 17-25 • Friday-Saturday

Gay Games IV, New York City.

June 23 • Thursday

BiNet Annual Meeting, New York City.

June 23-26 • Thursday-Sunday

International S/M Leather Fetish Celebration. Info: (212) 727-9878

June 24-25 • Friday-Saturday

International Bisexual Conference, New York City.

Asian & Pacific Islander Gay & Lesbian Conference, New York City. Info: (310) 390-2193

June 26 • Sunday

Stonewall 25: International March on the United Nations to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People, New York City. Info: (212) 626-6925

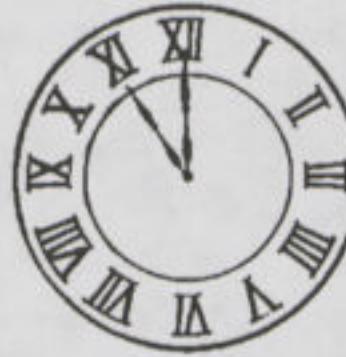
August 12-14 • Friday-Sunday

Bi Camp in Vermont. Watch this space for details!

November 17-20 • Thursday-Sunday

InQueery/InTheory/InDeed: Sixth North American Conference on Lesbian, Gay, and BISEXUAL Studies; University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

TIME TO SUBSCRIBE!



Support the Boston Bisexual Women's Network – and help us keep the newsletter alive!

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BiWomen!*

To start a new subscription or renew your current one, fill out the form below.

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your check to:*

BBWN
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140

Fourth Annual Women's Studies Conference, Univ. of Connecticut, October 1-2

Submission deadline June 10 for 250-word proposals of workshops, presentations, round-table discussions, etc. Info: Dr. Vara Neverow, (203) 397-4204, or Women's Studies Program at (203) 397-7020.

Ongoing Events

First Mondays:

Support Group for Anti-Racist White Women, 6:30-8:30pm at the Women's Theological Center, 140 Clarendon St., 6th fl., Boston. No charge, donation requested. Info: (617) 536-8782.

Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group, 7:30-9:30pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge. All women welcome. Info, topics: (617) 354-8807.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Freedom Trail Band Rehearsals. Concert and marching band, no auditions. 7:30-9:30pm. Location and info: Kathy (617) 236-5978.

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

First and Third Tuesdays:

Bisexual Issues Rap Group at the New Haven Women's Center, 614 Orange St., (corner Bishop) New Haven, Conn. Call to specify wheelchair access or ASL interpreting needs. Voice (203) 776-2658, TTY and voice (203) 397-2381.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group, 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

Sundays:

Put Your Best Foot Forward. Swing, Texas 2-Step, waltz and other dance classes for gays, lesbians and bisexuals at Ballet, ETC Dance Studios in Brookline. Call Sara Brodsky at 522-1444 for times and dates.

The Bi Office

is the Bisexual Resource Office, 95 Berkeley Street, Suite 613, Boston. (617) 338-9595

For ongoing events, see page 11.

A sampling of 1994 Pride Events

Sunday, June 5
Washington, DC
(202) 298-0970
New Jersey (908) NJ1-PRID

Monday-Sunday, June 6-12
Atlanta, GA
(404) 662-4533

Saturday, June 11
Boston, MA

Sunday, June 12
Portland, ME
(207) 871-0432

Saturday, June 18
Rhode Island
(401) 453-5414

Sunday, June 19
San Francisco
(415) 864-3733

Wed.-Sun., June 15-26
Europride '94, Amsterdam.
Info: Postbus 17601, 1001 JM Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Camping space most likely available! Bring your tents!

Sunday, June 26
New York City, Stonewall 25
(212) 439-1031
Toronto, Ontario

CALENDAR

February 3 • Thursday

Bisexual Writers Group. Open to all bisexual writers, whether published or not. Attendees are invited to read their material, contribute constructive criticism, bring information on publications soliciting material, and share tips on writing in general. 7-9pm at the Bi Office.

February 4-6 • Friday-Sunday

Full Circle of Women. A radically different, politically incorrect exploration of what it means to be a woman. For women-identified individuals living their lives as women. At the Essex Conference Center and Retreat in Essex, Mass. \$250 includes accommodations, all meals, use of hot tub and all workshops. Info: Janis Walworth (508) 386-7737.

February 6 • Sunday

First Sunday Bi Brunch. At 1pm at Mike's Restaurant, 9 Davis Sq., Somerville. Red Line to Davis Sq. All welcome; a great way to meet friends old and new.

February 5 • Saturday

Stonewall 25 Northeast Regional Organizing Meeting. Anyone interested in getting involved in Stonewall 25 International March on the U.N. to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People and/or Rally in Central Park is encouraged to attend. Find out how you can be a part of this Once-in-a-lifetime Event. 12-5pm at the Hartford G/LB Community Center, 1841 Broad St., Hartford, Conn. Info: Rick (CT), (203)953-1290; Flora (NH), (603) 382-9308; Tom (NYC), (718) 253-7298; Bonnie (NY), (518)674-3337; Sam (NYC), (718) 843-7619; Sue (NJ), (201) 501-8963.

STONEWALL 25 NEEDS YOU!

February 6 • Sunday

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space.

February 8 • Tuesday

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Meeting. *Fighting the Right Wing: State and local overview - where we are going from here.* 7-9pm, Boston Living Center, 140 Clarendon Street (YWCA), 7th floor, big room. Info: (617) 492-6393.

February 11 • Friday

Films at the Brattle Theatre. Meet at 5:30pm for a double feature: The Ballad of Little Jo (5:45pm) and Orlando (8pm). Interesting films featuring women who cross gender boundaries. At the Brattle in Harvard Square, Cambridge.

February 11-13 • Friday-Sunday

Northwest Regional Bisexual Conference, sponsored by BiNet Oregon and BiNet Northwest. Info: BiNet Oregon, P.O. Box 8232, Portland, OR 97207. Phone: (503) 236-4941.

February 12 • Saturday

A BBWN Valentine potluck brunch. Noon, at Kathrine's in Brookline. Let's discuss the many facets of love over some good food. Come 1/2 hour earlier (11:30) for the latest gossip about the developing BBWN phone tree! Five minutes from Coolidge Corner. Call Kathrine at 738-5383 for directions.



February 16 • Wednesday

BBWN working meeting. PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!! At this meeting we will follow up on new and exciting projects (phone tree, procedural manual, buddy system, among others). 7:30-9:30pm at the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street (near Central Square), Cambridge. All women welcome!

February 17 • Thursday

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm at the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. Free, open to public. Topic: *Safer Street presentation.* General meeting at 6:45pm with the program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

February 19 • Saturday

Monthly Bi Brunch. Meet at 11am at Thornton's, 100 Peterborough St. in the Fenway. Nearest T stop: Fenway on the Green line.

February 25-27 • Friday-Sunday

The Lavender Country and Folk Dancers present the **Fifth Annual Gender-Free Winter Dance Camp** at Becket/Chimney Corners Camp, Becket, Mass. \$130/150 (mem/non-mem). Info: Bev at (413) 863-3757.

March 3 • Thursday

Bisexual Writers Group. See Feb 3.



March 5 • Saturday

BBWN potluck brunch. Noon, at Robyn's in Central Square, Cambridge. Call Robyn at 495-8476 for directions.

March 6 • Sunday

First Sunday Bi Brunch. 1pm at Blazing Salads, 330 Washington St., Boston. Nearest T stop Downtown Crossing on Orange & Red lines. All welcome!

Bi Space. See Feb. 6.

March 9 • Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

March 11 • Friday

BiWomen submissions deadline for the February/March issue! PLAN AHEAD!

CALENDAR continues on page 11

BiWomen

The Newsletter of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network

This issue of BiWomen features
Bi Art and Bi Artists

Also: International Conference Celebrating
Bisexuality, Bi news and views



Foxtrot

© Liz Nania

April/May 1994 • Vol. 12 No. 2

Bi•Women

April/May 1994

Vol. 12 No. 2

Northeast Bi Community Meeting Planned

Stephanie Berger

Over the weekend of April 29-30, 1994, there will be a BiNET Northeast regional bi community meeting in Montpelier, Vermont.

As the Northeast regional representatives for BiNET, Laura Perez and myself will be facilitating. We are just in the beginning stages of this process so anyone interested is encouraged to get involved.

Our Aim:

To share resources, support and network within our states and regional communities in order to break down our individual and collective isolation as bisexuals. To teach and learn from each other in order to organize our local communities. (At least figure out what our needs are). And lastly to get information about BiNET, Stonewall and what other folks are doing nationally.

Why a regional meeting:

As bisexuals, our community is constantly changing—because of our own emerging needs, our growing pride in our self-identity and our rallying together as a community around this pride. In the face of constant attacks by conservative factions, negative stereotyping in the media

Bi Meeting continues on page 2

Bisexual Women in Film and Video

The material in this article is excerpted from Wayne Bryant's upcoming book, "Bisexual Characters in Film: From *Anas to Zee*".

The involvement of bisexual women in film projects extends far back into the silent film era. Biographical information on historical bisexuals can be very sketchy and often contradictory, so many have probably been lost to history. However, as information from close friends, diaries, and personal letters comes to light, we are slowly becoming able to piece together the historical influence that these pioneering women had on the film industry.

One of the hottest European entertainers in the early part of this century was the bisexual German dancer, Anita Berber. She had both male and female lovers among the rich and famous throughout the continent. Along with Conrad Veidt (better known for his roles in *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Casablanca*), she appeared in a 1919 film called *Anders als die Anderen* (*Different from the Others*). The film was produced by Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, of the Institute for Sexual Science, and openly appealed for repeal of the German law banning male homosexuality. All known copies of the film, along with

Bi Women in Film continues on page 9

Bi Meeting Details ...

The April 29-30 BiNET Northeast regional bi community meeting will be held at Christ Church, 64 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont. A social event sponsored by an ad hoc coalition of bisexual groups and individuals in Vermont will happen Friday, April 29th Meet at 7pm at the Church - then proceed to a local queer friendly cafe. Saturday, the 30th, there will be a regionwide (region being Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island) bi community meeting sponsored by BiNET (registration begins at 9:00am with the meeting taking place at 10:00am), and Saturday night there will be a "power" planning dinner for all interested folk.

Housing, child care and ASL interpretation will be available but please contact me and let me know if you need/want one of these services. The Church is wheelchair accessible and lunch will be provided on Saturday.

We are requesting a small donation to defray costs but no one will be turned away.

Stephanie
virago@world.std.com
(617) 666-3149

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recycled paper



Volunteers of the Month

THANKYOU

THANKYOU

THANKYOU

Nancy Bowers

Kathrine Douthit

Annet H.

Susan Rooney

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Tess

Laura L. Sachs

Stephanie Berger

Robyn Ochs

Gail Z.

Linda Blair

Susan S.

BiWomen is published bi-monthly.

Hunters and Gatherers

Julie E.

Laura Sachs

Robyn Ochs

Marcia Deihl

Kathrine Douthit

Kathleen Hepburn

Stephanie Berger

Design:

Kathleen Hepburn

Production:

Kathleen Hepburn

Linda Blair

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Bi Meeting, from page 1

and continuing invisibility in mainstream and queer communities, it's important we begin a dialog as bisexuals in the northeast. Through networking and resource sharing we can only grow more visible and stronger as individuals and a community.

Agenda:

Dialog. The hope is that through our conversations prior to the 30th, we can develop a working agenda and that participants will continue to bring their/our needs to the table. Some topics that have come up already are: rural organizing; how to meet other bisexuals in the suburbs; bi visibility in gay/lesbian organizations within small/rural communities; setting up support groups; networking strategies and support for people of color; support for married people and those in "alternative" relationships; coming out—this is just a few of a range of possibilities.

Structure:

Well, we're still working on that. We're hoping to use a structure similar to that of the Boston area community meetings. Open discussion, small group breakout (we *will* get to it) and then more discussion and social time.

Looking to the future:

A two-day event this Fall.

What can you do:

What do you want to do...

- pass this message on to folks you think might be interested
- come to the April meeting
- get involved in your local area to organize people to come to the event
- work with area folks to make it happen
- I can give Vermonters a local phone number to call; we're still looking for local contacts in NH, Maine and maybe RI
- e-mail me for more info
- some logistics we need help with:
 - creating the agenda
 - being the local outreach contact
 - coordinating bringing food to the event
 - selling t-shirts and buttons
 - just plain getting the word out
 - coordinating carpooling in your area
- This can really be what we make it.
- Stephanie Berger
virago@world.std.com
(617) 666-3149

Coming in the next issue of Bi Women

The theme for the June/July issue will be

Bi Community/Activism in Boston and BBWN Herstory.

If you've been active in BBWN or the Bi community in Boston in the past, think about writing a retrospective, or writing about a particular event or events that you remember. If you are new to the scene, write about the community as you see it. Don't worry if you can only write a sentence or two, JUST WRITE SOMETHING! This is your newsletter; nobody expects professional writing. Just share your thoughts. Communicating our thoughts and experiences helps build our community.

DEADLINE for the June/July issue:

Friday, May 6, 1993

(it's early because Memorial Day pushes the newsletter stuffing up one week)

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten) or on floppy disk (PC or Mac), and include a name and phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published, please tell us! Otherwise we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. You may contribute anonymously, or just use your first name, if you wish.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:



BiWomen
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140



The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Letters

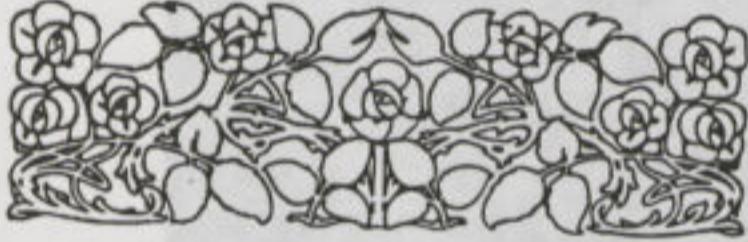
Dear Friend,

Please put me on your mailing list for your newsletter. I am a 16 year old female junior at a *very* small school. I am bisexual, I don't know anyone else like me. Thank you.

also in the mail...

"Les*Bi*Gay Merchandise for the hip & happy homo", from Dan Kaufman Graphics, a catalog of great buttons, bumper stickers, post cards, etc., including "I'm Bisexual and I'm not attracted to you", "Bi American", "Monosexuality bores me", "Better Blatant than Latent", and "Well, I don't think you exist either!" Don Kaufman Graphics, P.O. Box 4901, Washington, DC 20008

Bi Lines, a newsletter from The Richmond (Va.) Bisexual Network, also known as ROBIN. Subscriptions: \$6 to ICU2 Publications, 3310 Ellwood Ave. #D, Richmond, Va 23221. ▶



Live Bisexuals On Stage!!!

New Words 20th Birthday Festival

Many events and sale!

Featuring, in concert,

Marcia Deihl,

singer and Bisexual Activist-at-Large,
and Friends

Saturday, April 23, 1994

4pm Free!

New Words, 186 Hampshire St.,
Cambridge, Mass.

Info: (617) 876-5310.

Why she returned to the coast and I stayed here

The distance frightened her, the open plain, thirty, forty miles on smogless days no obstructing oaks, red maples, nothing but grass unwatered for weeks, highway before and behind us, mountain. Great Lakes waves washing over stone won't rock us to sleep here, cloud the only ocean.

I could be lost too, might open up so much to take in this view, I forget my body, dwarfed insect next to foothills rising from prairie, then suddenly I'm a mountain myself, changeable as evening light on huge flat slabs of rock; I could melt, cool, solidify into granite, slate, become what I am not, these vista like loneliness, sheer possibility.

Michele Spring Moore

Michele Spring Moore is a student in the master's degree program in creative writing at the University of Colorado in Boulder, and a founder of the Rochester (N.Y.) Bisexual Women's Network. Her work has been published in Bay Windows and Fireweed: A Feminist Quarterly.

By the way...

A while back, at a BBWN planning meeting, we brainstormed some ideas for upcoming issues of BiWomen. What do you think of these topics?

- sex & the bi/les community
- out at work
- bridging the les/bi gap
- les/bi rap
- long-term relationships
- non-monogamy
- gender issues
- transgender
- spirituality
- safe-sex/SEX
- how to throw a safe sex party
- parenting/children
- racism
- race/cultural identity
- connecting to other cultures
- communities
- love story/fiction/poetry
- politics
- regional/national organizing
- bi movement history
- bis in history
- bi. & feminism
- bi books
- nature
- AIDS/HIV safe sex STDs
- health/ h. activism
- group families/alternative families
- older bi women
- bi community in Boston
- bi youth
- abuse survivors
- body identity
- bi & violence
- men
- making other communities less bi phobic

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BI COPS WANTED!

Job-hunting? The Boston Police Department is recruiting bi women and men. The BPD's liaison to the queer community will be doing a presentation about the job openings and police work soon at Northeastern University. Check Bay Windows for the date. Call Norman Hill at (617) 343-4345 or Ed Callahan at (617) 343-4677 for more info or apply in person at any Boston police station by April 8. Entrance exams will be held on May 21. ▼

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY OF BISEXUAL GROUPS NOW AVAILABLE

The 1994 edition of the International Directory of Bisexual Groups is hot off the press. This issue has over 100 new listings and includes bisexual and lesbian/gay/bisexual groups in 18 countries and over 40 US states. You can get your own copy by sending \$5 to BRC, PO Box 639, Cambridge MA 02140. ▼

An Irish Stew

Boston's 90-year-old St. Patrick's Day parade made national news this month, as the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decided to uphold a local gay, lesbian and bisexual Irish group's right to march. The court ruled that it was a public event, and as such must be open to all citizens. In response, the parade's sponsors, the South Boston Allied War Veterans, cancelled the parade. ▼

All Bi, MYSELF by Kathrine Douthit

On Bisexual Art

- A Man with a Flexible Gender,
- A Femmie Self-Portrait did Render —
- Since that Blushing Brushstroke
- Made him No More a Bloke —
- She's got Lots of Louvre Guards to Defend Her.



Friends Don't Let Friends Love Drunk

Grief catches up with me once again.
Sometimes I can outrun it for days,
Weeks at a time,
But today it got me, yessir.

It doesn't tap me on the shoulder
Or grab me from behind in a terrible grip,
It just creeps in like fog
Through my unsuspecting skin
Until the tears just have to fall.

YOU! With your

cheerful
unrelenting
protective
physicality,
You with your
obliviousness
obliviousness
obliviousness
To the simple fact:

You were fond of me
While I was in love with you.

By not seeing you at all
I gamble with my silence.
I play the old love lottery,
And the price of my ticket is high:

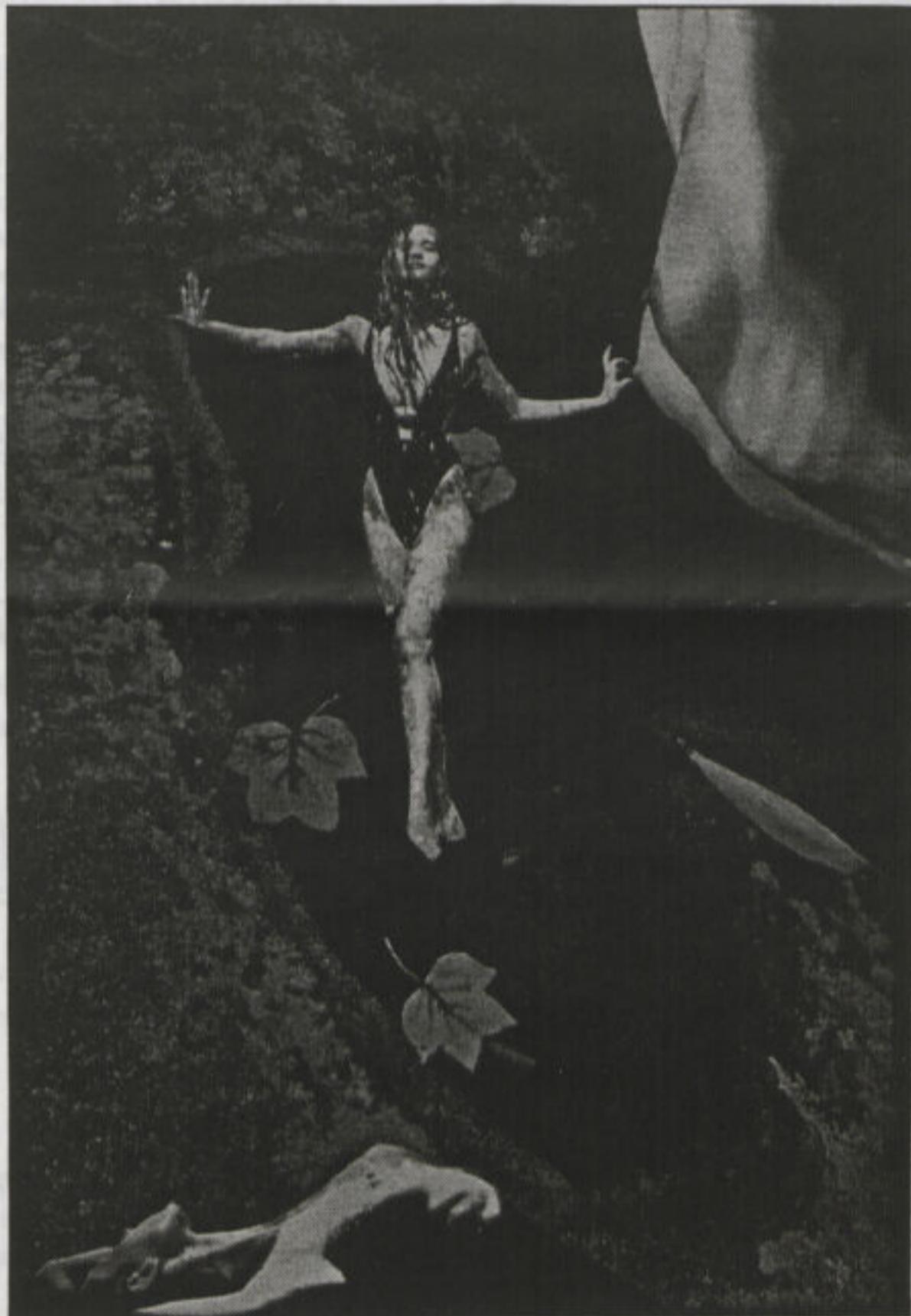
Your dear
deep
singular
Friendship.

Marcia Deihl
July 5, 1993

Laurels for Our Lauras!

BBWN's own Laura Perez and Laura Sachs are quoted in The Philadelphia Inquirer's Sunday Magazine from March 6! The article, by Julia M. Klein, is titled "Pair and Re-pair" and stretches for 7 positive pages! The mood is supportive and the story (which is the Cover Story for that week) is beautifully illustrated with both drawings and photos.

- K.D.



Something has awoken in me, was released, in a brief encounter with a stranger. Was it a dream? Will a reality surface, as if from the depths of a glistening pool? Her eyes spoke, her lips, her tongue, and her touch was like feathers floating from the sky. It was not love, this time, but animal passion, a feeling so primitive, so organic, so removed from my being. But now I have emerged from the darkness and there is light.

© K. KIRK



Calls for Manuscripts

Lesbian Erotica - Single black lesbian, married bi sex radical, soft butch with brains, every woman who has ever wanted a woman. Send prose (5,000 words max) and poetry (6 max). Deadline: 6/1/94. Anthology, P.O. Box 440478, Somerville, MA 02144.

Stanford - Seeking social, cultural, & political history of gays, lesbians, bisexuals at Stanford University before 1980. Personal memories, photos, other info. Contact Gerald Koskovich, P.O. Box 14301, San Francisco, CA 94114-0301.

Request for Donations

The "Coming Out as Bisexual" group has been meeting since February and is off to a good start. Contributions are urgently needed to permit us to extend our hours and remain accessible to people of limited income. Any contributions would be greatly appreciated and can be made payable to Laura Perez, c/o Bisexual Resources Center, 95 Berkeley St, Suite 613, Boston, MA 02116. See the BiWomen calendar for meeting schedule. Many Thanks!

BECAUSE!

The Third Annual BE-CAUSE (Bisexual Empowerment Conference: A Uniting Supportive Experience) will be held on April 22-23 in Minneapolis. This year's emphasis will be on lifestyle and sexual empowerment. Workshops will cover such subjects as family issues, coming out, bi visibility, erotic spirituality, combating racism and homophobia, and living within the heterosexual and gay communities. Keynote speaker is Carol Queen, bisexual writer and activist from San Francisco.

The conference will be held at the University of Minnesota on April 23, with keynote speech on Friday, April 22. Registration is \$45. For more info, contact Lou Hoffman at (612) 788-3702, or write BECAUSE 1994, 1322 Lowry Ave. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418.

- from *North Bi Northwest*, the newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network.

Bisexuality.

Want to talk about it?

We're here... BiRequest
A new discussion group in New York City by and for bisexual and bi-friendly people. A chance to socialize and exchange ideas on topics and issues relevant to you.

BiRequest meets on Thursdays, 6-7:30 pm at 131 West 72nd St, Studio 1.

Call our information line.
And then come talk.
(212) 714-7714



Rose of San Antone

© E. Nania '91

Hey Bi Artists and Zine People!

If you write or draw (or publish) for one of our local (or not so local) underground magazines (the photocopied type, supported by major elbow-grease and burning creative energy) or if you'd like to — I am looking for contributors for a "Zine Reading." I am looking for small skits, recitable erotica, poems, drawings, paintings, cartoons, and other Zine material to be presented by their creators or the close friends of creators at a cafe or some such place, in perhaps as soon as a month or two from now. I would ask that the artist bring with her 50 copies of her piece so that a Zine may be made at the reading and carried home by the audience! Please — if you're interested in this exciting project — call Kathrine at (617) 738-5383 right away!



I waited for you to come. I was always waiting. Searching. In every man or woman I seduced I hoped to find you. I looked for you in their eyes, their laughter, their love, but you were never there. Yesterday I was walking along a bank full of clover and grasses and tiny yellow flowers. The sweet fragrance of Spring intoxicated me. I noticed a woman far in the distance. She walked like you, her hair just as yours, honey blond blowing in the wind. She was yes oh yes she was you.

We picnicked. By the river we ate. Relaxed, we sipped wine from earthenware goblets. And you looked into my eyes and I knew. And slowly, you led me down towards the sweet verdant ground. Relaxed and ever so slowly your lips whispered secrets into my ear, secret thoughts through my hair, across my eyes, slowly down my face, my throat. You opened my blouse and I welcomed your touch. Nothing made sense in that warm grassy dizzy delirious moment — birds chirping, the wind — oh the warmth of the wind across our skin and yes that feels good and keep whispering — the scent so sweet across the grass — and the wind oh the wind and yes oh yes oh yes — yes

A rooster crowed. The sun was just rising and there was a mist on the grass. I lay there alone among clover and grasses and tiny yellow flowers. In the distance, a woman walked alone, her hair blowing in the wind.

- K. Kirk

The 1994 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO CELEBRATE BISEXUALITY (ICCB)

Part of Bi Pride '94, to be held in conjunction with Stonewall 25
June 25, 1994 - Greenwich Village - New York City

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

WHEN: Saturday, June 25, 1994; 9am - 7pm

WHERE: 351 West 18th St. (between 8th & 9th Aves.), Manhattan, New York City

EVENTS: Workshops, speakers, bi buys, performances, and more!

KEYNOTE: We are proud to feature Elise Matthesen as our keynote speaker. Author, poet, musician, storyteller and activist, Matthesen has contributed to the anthology "Bi Any Other Name" among other publications, and been active in the Bi community both in and outside the Midwest for a number of years.

REGISTRATION FEES: (US Dollars)

Payment postmarked by May 1: After May 1:

One person:	\$35.00	\$45.00
Two people (bring a friend and save!):	\$50.00	\$60.00
Three people (bring 2 and save more!):	\$60.00	\$75.00
Student Rate (with valid ID):	\$20.00	\$25.00

Make check or money order (in US dollars) payable to: Rose Capone - Treasurer.

(Please do not send cash through the mail). Mail your payment and the completed bottom portion of this form to:

ICCB '94 - Registration, P.O. Box 497, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108

For vendor rates and scholarship info, call the ICCB Info Line: (212) 592-3698,
mail to above address, or e-mail to skyler@panix.com or betenoir@echonyc.com.

Space is limited, so register early! Spread the news, and we'll see you there!

This message is from the Bi Conference organizers in NY.

To Our Out-of-Town Friends:

We hope you're as excited about the 1994 conference and Bi Pride weekend as we are! If we all pull together, we can make this a memorable, enriching, successful event.

Here are some of the tasks we'd like people/organizations outside the New York area to volunteer to do:

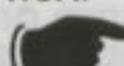
- * Reproduce and distribute registration form widely. (Make two-sided copies if possible.)
- * Contact (or coordinate contact with) local college/university queer groups and local bisexual groups to let them know about the conference.
- * Contact potential speakers/workshop leaders/performers/vendors. Ask them to leave a message on 212-592-3698. That's our voice mail box.
- * Raise \$100 or more and send it to us.

We also need help organizing. Right now, it's just five of us. If you (or someone you know) want to fill one of the following roles, please let us know as soon as possible:

- * Fundraising Coordinator *
- Housing Coordinator * Engineering/Technical (sound, lights etc.)
- * Artistic Director for the daylong performance space * Vendor Relations (esp. for out-of-town vendors) * On-Site Workshop Administrator * Access Coordinator * Stonewall Liaison * ILGA Liaison

Please stay in touch with us through voicemail at (212) 592-3698, or e-mail to skyler@panix.com or betenoir@echonyc.com

Thanks, ICCB Ad Hoc
Steering Committee

More on next
page... 

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Stonewall 25
Call (800) 216-1880**

The 1994 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO CELEBRATE BISEXUALITY (ICCB) *(continued from preceding page)*

SUGGESTED WORKSHOPS

As part of ICCB '94, we will be hosting workshops on a variety of subjects related to bisexuality. Lend us your ideas! Write down some workshops you would like to see (or lead!), on the lower portion of this form, or indicate your interest in some of the following proposed topics:

1. Bi's with non-bi partners
2. Bi's in the Queer movement/the separate Bi movement
3. Coming out as Bi
4. Bisexual Identity, Jewish Heritage: The Other Double Triangle
5. Bi visibility in the media
6. Bi's in Queer history: the appropriation of our (s)heroes
7. Bisexuals in families / bisexual parents
8. Bisexual spirituality
9. Bi networks and resources
10. Couples, relationships, marriages: a bisexual perspective
11. "Sibling rivalry": Biphobia among G&L folk / Homophobia among Bi's
12. Bisexuals in the arts: what we're creating
13. Bisexuals in entertainment
14. Bidar: is there a particular "Bi style?"
15. Flirting 101: an "eyes-on" workshop
16. Safe sex for same-sex and other-sex partners
17. Bisexual survivors of rape and assault
18. Bi discrimination: problems and solutions
19. AIDS in the bisexual community
20. Bi, straight and lesbian feminists: Three degrees of separation?
21. People of color in the Bi community
22. Bisexuals in recovery
23. How to build the Bi community
24. Gender of the soul: male/female identity and bisexuality
25. "Transcend yourself": TV/TS/TG people in the Bi community
26. Bi Pagans: Female and Male in Deity and Sex
27. "Bi-Sci-Fi": The bisexual community at Cons and among Fans
28. Body Art workshop: celebration and discussion of tattoos/piercings
29. B/D & S/M workshop
30. "Bi's On Line": Bisexuality in cyberspace

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P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA
02140**

More on
previous page...

REGISTRATION FORM (CONTINUED)

(please type or print)

I would like to see workshops on the following topics (or number/title above):

Top Choice: # _____ Title: _____

2nd Choice: # _____ Title: _____

3rd Choice: # _____ Title: _____

YES! I would like to lead one or more workshops at the Conference, on the following topic(s): (your own idea or one of those listed!)

(please enclose a short bio and summary of the workshop on another sheet)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Do you need housing for the weekend? _____ Can you provide housing? _____

Where did you hear about the Conference? _____

Bi Women in Film, from page 1

the institute itself, were destroyed when Adolf Hitler came to power. Recently, fragments with Ukrainian subtitles have been discovered in the former East Germany.

An influential bi woman in the United States at that time was Natasha Rambova. She designed the sets and costumes and wrote the screenplay for an all gay, lesbian, and bisexual production of *Salom* in 1923. The film was a tribute to bisexual writer, Oscar Wilde. Rambova was best known in Hollywood at that time as the wife of bisexual actor, Rudolph Valentino. Her lover, Alla Nazimova, played the title role. Nazimova's husband, Charles Bryant was credited as director, although film historians now believe that Rambova deserved most of the recognition. Nazimova's 1921 film *Camille* contains a short lesbian scene.

Louise Brooks claims to have been straight, but freely admits that she often went to lesbian bars while working in Berlin. She said that her best friend at that time was a lesbian. In a recently biography, however, author Barry Paris says that she had at least one female lover. In any event, her most famous role was as Lulu in G. W. Pabst's film, *Pandora's Box* (1929). Lulu was a fun-loving bisexual woman who was lovers with Countess Geschwitz and a number of men.

Hilda Doolittle, known in the poetry world as simply HD, was a very innovative and influential writer of the period. She regularly wrote film reviews for "Close Up" magazine, edited by her bisexual lover, Kenneth Macpherson. Gertrude Stein was also a contributor. In 1930, Doolittle and Macpherson teamed up with the writer, Bryher (who was Macpherson's wife and HD's lover) to create a breakthrough film called *Borderline*. This film was very controversial in the U.S. at the time because inclusion of Paul Robeson and his wife in the cast made the film interracial, and because Bryher played the part of a very butch lesbian. Robeson broke the color barrier again when he played the title role in the first mixed-race American stage production of *Othello*, at the Brattle Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

One of the best-known lesbian films of the 1930s was *Mädchen in Uniform*, based on the play, *Gestern und Heute (Yesterday and Today)*, written by German poet Christa Winsloe. She was married to Count Ludwig Hatvany at the time the play was written, but later became the lover of journalist Dorothy Thompson. Winsloe was murdered in the Nazi-occupied portion of France in 1944 after a long career of anti-fascist writing.

The two hottest female stars of the 1930s were European born bisexuals, Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich. One of Dietrich's most famous roles was as a cabaret performer in the 1930 film, *Morocco*. In the part, she has a male lover, but shocked movie patrons of the time by

coming off stage during a performance (in her tux) and kissing a female audience member squarely on the lips. Garbo was discovered by Swedish bisexual director, Mauritz Stiller. He brought her to the U.S. where she starred in many films, including *Queen Christina*, the story of Sweden's legendary bisexual queen.

By the mid 1930s, the rise of fascism in the U.S. and abroad permitted strict censorship laws to be enacted or dictated. Homosexuality, or even the hint of it, was prohibited on the American screen and in much of Europe. People involved in the film industry had to be particularly wary of coming out or they could easily find themselves without a job. This was the case with James Whale, director of *Frankenstein* and the very campy *Bride of Frankenstein*. It is now known that two of the finest leading actresses of that era were bisexual. These were Judy Garland (*Wizard of Oz* and *A Star is Born*) and Tallulah Bankhead (*Lifeboat* and *Stage Door Canteen*).

Paris, in the early to middle part of this century, was a hotbed of activity for bisexual women writers, many of whose works have become material for the film industry. One such writer was Anas Nin, whose diary entries on relationships with Henry Miller and his wife, June, served as the basis for the 1990 film, *Henry and June*. Colette was a well known writer whose film reviews were very influential in the French cinema. Her screenplay for the film *Olivia* (1951) told the story of lesbian passions between students at a French boarding school. Her earliest work to reach the screen was *La Vagabonde*, filmed in 1917. The 1991 film, *Becoming Colette*, tells the story of her early career as a writer. Arguably the greatest of all French writers during this period was Simone de Beauvoir, whose *The Blood of Others* was turned into a pretty bad film starring Jodie Foster (therefore not a total loss) in 1984. An English bisexual whose writing has recently been adapted for film is Virginia Woolf (*Orlando*).

The modern era of American film begins with the lifting of Hollywood's ban on homosexuality in film in the late 1960s. Bisexual English actress Coral Browne appeared as a lesbian in the film *The Killing of Sister George* (1969). The previous year she had appeared in another film with bisexual characters, *The Legend of Lylah Claire*. Bi actress Maria Schneider made her debut with bi actor Marlon Brando in *Last Tango in Paris*.

After Garland and Dietrich, one of the first bi singers to appear on film, albeit posthumously, was Janis Joplin in the documentary, *Janis* (1974). Unfortunately the film makes no mention of her relationships with women. Another singer to make it to celluloid was "I'm not bisexual, I'm just Holly" Holly Near, who appeared with Don Johnson in a really bad underground film called *Stanley Sweetheart's Magic Garden*. She appears in what may be an

Bi Women in Film continues on next page

Advertise in BiWomen!

For only \$10 per issue, your message will reach over 700 subscribers. Save \$5 and advertise in three issues for \$25.

Send your business-card sized ad or

personal ad (50

words or less) and a

check (to BBWN) to:

BiWomen, c/o
BBWN, P.O. Box 639,
Cambridge, MA
02140

Such a deal!

A discussion group for gay, lesbian and bisexual artists, writers, actors, etc. is forming in the Edgewood neighborhood of Providence. Call Bob Ciciones at 941-2664 for more information.

Bi Youth

The National Coalition for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth [The Coalition] is a new organization of groups and individuals formed to serve the needs of lesbian and questioning youth. Our goal is to help them become happy, successful, confident and vital adults. To this end, we work to provide the information, resources and support to assist on their journey of self-realization, self-acceptance and coming out. The Coalition is a non-profit organization. For more information, or to contribute to their resources, contact the Coalition at P.O. Box 24589, San Jose, CA 95154-4589.

Bi Women in Film, from preceding page

even worse film, *Angel, Angel, Down We Go*. She can also be found with River Phoenix in *Dog Fight*. Singer Grace Jones has appeared in a number of movies including two with bisexual characters: *The Trout* and *Siesta*.

Of course, the most famous of all bisexual singers to make the jump to the silver screen is Madonna. We knew she was something special right from her first starring role in *Desperately Seeking Susan* (1985). Since then, she has not let us down in such films as *Dick Tracy*, *A League of Their Own*, and her autobiographical concert tour film *Truth or Dare* (released in Europe as *In Bed With Madonna*).

Worth mentioning, although we don't know her sexual orientation, is Amanda Donohoe. Besides her well-known bi attorney on *L.A. Law*, she has played a bisexual character in *The Rainbow* (1989) and a seductive, bisexual snake-woman in *Lair of the White Worm* (1988).

Since the bisexual community began organizing in the early 1980s, a number of bi women, both within and without the community, have started turning up in both narrative and "how to" films. Among these are two films on the subject of female ejaculation. The first was a Canadian film called *Nice Girls Don't Do It* (1990), with Sharon Bell demonstrating her ejaculatory ability and talking about the reactions of her sexual partners, both male and female. Recently released was *How to Female Ejaculate*, with more discussion and demonstrations by various San Francisco women including the bi community's own Carol Queen.

Susie Bright, best known until recently as Susie Sexpert in the publication "On Our Backs", appears as herself in Monika Treut's *Virgin Machine* (1989), teaching Ina Blum's character all about dildos and the joys of strip shows. Also that year she appeared in the role of John Lennon in an all-female underground film called *Grapefruit*. Bisexual performance artist Annie Sprinkle has begun appearing recently in a number of films and videos. Among the most difficult to locate is *Linda/Les and Annie* (1989), in which she tells us more than we wanted to

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BBWN and send to:

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95 Berkeley St., Suite 613, Boston,
MA 02116.**

Order NOW!

know about her lover's transformation from a woman to a man. The following year she played a major role in Monika Treut's excellent film, *My Father is Coming*. Most recently, she directed and starred in *The Sluts and Goddess Video Workshop*, wherein she teaches women how to really enjoy sex. She engages in a five minute and ten second multiple orgasm (complete with a sexual arousal meter!) to make sure her audience gets the message. Another bi performance artist with a growing list of film credits is Sandra Bernhardt, who can be seen in *Heavy Petting*, *Without You I'm Nothing*, and the Sesame Street favorite, *Follow That Bird*. Sandra currently appears in a bisexual role on the *Roseanne* television show.

A new generation of bisexual documentarists is taking up the challenge of telling the community's story. One of these is English bi transsexual Rachel O'Connor, whose *Identity: Transsexuals & Transvestites Speaking* tells the story of the difficulties of being a transgender person in the U.K. More familiar to American bisexuals are Boston area women, Sharon Gonsalves and Jayne Sportelli. Ms. Gonsalves' video *Bi the Way...*, which premiered at BiFest Boston 1992, includes interviews with a variety of politically active bisexuals. Her earlier *More Than a Survivor*, deals with the problems and triumphs of adult women recovering from childhood incest. Sharon most recently appeared in the documentary, *Embracing Our Sexuality: Women Talk About Sex*. A documentary on bisexuals in the San Francisco area is in the works under the direction of Catherine Byers-White.

Given the growing influence of bisexual women in film and video and the growth of the bisexual movement in general, we can look forward to a continuation of this trend in the near future. We will see more good work from our current favorites, more new bi faces in the industry, and recover more bi women from the closets of film history.

-Wayne M. Bryant



CALENDAR, from page 12

May 9 • Monday

BiWomen volunteer night. Type articles for the BiWomen newsletter, read the mail, make phone calls, or just chat and eat the FREE MUNCHIES!! Please come 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Info: (617) 338-9595.

May 11 • Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

May 18 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See April 6.

May 19 • Thursday

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. See Feb. 17. Topic: Talking On Television.

May 20-21 • Friday evening-Saturday

Carrying Our Nations in Our Hearts. In this retreat, we will explore how attending to our people's histories of dislocation and cultural strength can help us create communities that honor our spirituality in our political work. \$2-80 includes room and board. Sponsored by the Women's Theological Center. Info: (617) 536-8782.

May 21 • Saturday

Saturday Bi Brunch. 11am at Thornton's, 100 Peterborough St. in Boston's Fenway. Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green line.

May 23 • Monday

BBWN newsletter stuffing volunteer night. Free anecdotes, gossip, unsolicited advice, jokes, fun! Help us get the newsletter out to those who need it. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Info: (617) 338-9595.

May 21 • Saturday

Sunday Bi Brunch. This month's brunch will be at the food court in the Prudential Center, **1:30pm**. Relatively cheap and lots of variety! Meet a few minutes early in front of the Star Market on Boylston St. and we will go in together. Nearest T stops are Prudential on the E branch of the Green Line or Auditorium on the B, C and D branches of the Green Line.

Looking Ahead ...

June 11 • Saturday
Boston Pride March

June 17-25 • Friday-Saturday
Gay Games IV, New York City.

June 23-26 • Thursday-Sunday
International S/M Leather Fetish Celebration. Info: (212) 727-9878

June 24 • Friday
BiNet Annual Meeting, New York City.

June 25 • Saturday
International Conference Celebrating Bisexuality, New York City.

Asian & Pacific Islander Gay & Lesbian Conference, New York City. Info: (310) 390-2193

June 26 • Sunday

Stonewall 25: International March on the United Nations to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People, New York City. Info: (212) 626-6925

August 4-6 • Thursday-Saturday
U.K. National Conference in Edinburgh.

August 12-14 • Friday-Sunday

Bi Camp in Vermont. A weekend of camping and swimming with Bi people in Southern Vermont. Details to come...

November 17-20 • Thursday-Sunday

InQueery/InTheory/InDeed: Sixth North American Conference on Lesbian, Gay, and BISEXUAL Studies; University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.



These are some events from the Women's History Month Calendar from the Southern Connecticut State University, 501 Crescent St., New Haven, Conn. For more info, call (203) 397-7020.

April 6 • Wednesday

War experiences and survival of Bosnian women. 7-9pm in the Board of Trustees Room.

April 8 • Friday

"Shards of Memories," a poetry reading by Shula Charnoff. 12-2pm in the Board of Trustees Room.

April 15 • Friday

Piano performance and lecture by Dr. Eileen Hunt. 11am-12:30pm in Earl Hall.

Also of interest from SCSU's Women's Studies Program are the following institutes:

Jane Austin's World: An Adventure into English Manners and Mores. Travel to London and Bath, England, Aug. 4-15. Info: Dr. Adelaide P. Amore at (203) 397-4551.

Teaching Virginia Woolf. Held in conjunction with the 4th Annual Virginia Woolf Conference at Bard College in Annadale-on-Hudson, N.Y. May 30-June 12. Info: Dr. Vara Neverow at (203) 397-7020.

A Women's Place is in the Curriculum.

Strategies for developing curricula that offer diverse perspectives, celebrate women's lives and contributions, and infuse women's studies into K-12 curriculum. August. Info: Dr. Virginia Quiroga at (203) 397-4584. ▶

Ongoing Events

First Mondays:

Support Group for Anti-Racist White Women, 6:30-8:30pm at the Women's Theological Center, 140 Clarendon St., 6th fl., Boston. No charge, donation requested. Info: (617) 536-8782.

Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30-9:30pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge. All women welcome. Info, topics: (617) 354-8807.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Freedom Trail Band

Rehearsals. Concert and marching band, no auditions. 7:30-9:30pm. Location and info: Kathy (617) 236-5978.

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual. A free informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 338-9595.

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bisexual Issues Rap Group at the New Haven Women's Center, 614 Orange St., (corner Bishop) New Haven, Conn. Call to specify wheelchair access or ASL interpreting needs. Voice (203) 776-2658, TTY and voice (203) 397-2381.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

The Bi Office

is the Bisexual Resource Office, 95 Berkeley Street, Suite 613, Boston. (617) 338-9595

For ongoing events, see page 11.

May 2, 9, 16 and 23 • Mondays
Finding Goddess in Jewish Creation Stories. Taught by Shifrah Lilith, this class will look at creation stories in the Torah, Rabbinic Sources, midrash and Kabbalistic texts that focus on creation as well as feminist commentary. We will compare Jewish sources with creation stories and midrash. \$40 (sliding scale available). At Havurat Shalom, 113 College Ave., Somerville (near Davis Sq. T). Info: (617) 623-3367.

CALENDAR

April 2 • Saturday

BBWN Brunch. Noon, at Kathleen's in Copley Square. See where the newsletter is produced! Shop in hoity-toity Back Bay after brunch! Directions: (617) 236-5978.

April 3 • Sunday (Easter)

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space.

April 6 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. A free informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 338-9595.

April 8-10 • Friday-Sunday

Making Plans: a Retreat for Anti-Racist White Women. This retreat in Auburndale will be an extended time to explore with others the concrete opportunities each of us has for furthering an anti-racist agenda and the issues that come up for us in making our best intentions a living reality. Participants should come prepared with a list of their anti-racism goals for (minimally) one year. \$20-75 includes food. Sponsored by the Women's Theological Center. Info: (617) 536-8782.

April 16 • Saturday

Saturday Bi Brunch. Meet at 11am at Grecian Yearning, 174 Harvard Ave. in Brighton. Take the B branch of the Green Line to the corner of Commonwealth and Harvard near Pizzaria Uno.

April 20 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See April 6.

April 21 • Thursday

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm at the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. Free, open to public. Topic: Talking about religion. General meeting at 6:45pm with the program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

April 22-24 • Friday-Sunday

BECAUSE (Bisexual Empowerment Conference: A Uniting Supportive Experience) in Minneapolis. See page 6 for details.

April 24 • Sunday

Sunday Bi Brunch. A Korean buffet at 1:30pm Arirang Restaurant, 162 Mass. Ave. in Boston. Take the Green Line to Auditorium. South on Mass. Ave., past Berklee School of Music, about two blocks on the left.

April 29 • Friday

BiNET Social Event, 7pm at a bi-friendly cafe in Montpelier, Vermont. See page 1 for details.

Support the Boston Bisexual Women's Network – and help us keep the newsletter coming!

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 \$20-30 (suggested) _____
 \$30-100 _____

Send this form along with your check to:

BBWN
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140

April 30 • Saturday

BiNET USA Regional Meeting in Montpelier, Vermont. See page 1 for details.

May 4 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See April 6.

May 6 • Friday

BiWomen submissions deadline for the June/July issue! Be kind to your humble editor and SUBMIT EARLY!

May 7 • Saturday

BBWN potluck brunch. Noon, at Marcia Deihl's, 32 Jefferson St. in East Cambridge. Directions: (617) 864-2563.

CALENDAR continues on page 11

THE BiVOCALS' Bi-story

by Robyn Ochs and Marcia Deihl

"What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open."

-Muriel Rukeyser

"While the groups of the 1970s were often predominantly male, many of the 1980s organizations were founded and led by women. Bisexual women had begun to experience alienation from lesbian communities as separatism and polarization around sexual orientation increased in the late 1970s. For many bi women, bisexuality was an integral part of their feminist politics and they wanted their groups to reflect this emphasis. The Boston Bisexual Women's Network (formed in 1983) and the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network (founded in 1986) are based on these principles." (1)



The BiVocals –
Strange Bedfellows.
Summer, 1983.
(L to R) Lucinda,
Robyn, Joanna,
Lisa & Marcia

**A History of
the Boston
Bisexual
Community**
see page 10

The Unmaking of an Activist

by [redacted]

I am not a bisexual activist anymore.

I tried so hard to fit into the bisexual activist community, finding finally that it is what you make of it. In some ways it is a strange little ghetto struggling to embrace a very real political agenda. Sexuality is such a fundamental yet terribly misunderstood aspect of our humanity. The real reason I let my activism fall away from me probably had to do with the strain of feeling like a spokesperson for such a lonely cause.

I loved the Queer Nation manifesto of four years ago, "I Hate Straights" and the sentiments of liberation it proclaimed, even though I never went on to join that group. I loved ideas, and I wanted to dive deep, to ask, "What does it mean to *love* — oneself, oneself as a woman, another woman, a man?" I led the first Bisexual People of Color workshop at BiFest, and a

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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recycled paper



Volunteers of the Month

Heidi M.
Katherine Holden
Laura L. Sachs
Carla I.
Stephanie Berger
Robin Ochs
Laura Marina Perez
Gail Z.
Linda Blair
Kathleen Hepburn
Susan S.
PLUS...
Those of you who helped stuff the last issue...Thank You!!!!

BiWomen is published bi-monthly.

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Illustrations by Liz Nania
and Kathrine Douthit

Boston Bi Community News

On April 30, 1994, Bi activists from the New England area met in Vermont. Read all about it on page 8.

Pride season is upon us! And what would Boston Pride Day be without the Bi Pride Brunch? Details on page 12.

Coming in August: Bi Camp 1994! What's BiCamp? See page 11.

Queer Resources Directory Needs Volunteers

The Queer Resources Directory (QRD) is an online repository devoted to information of interest to the Queer (LesBiGay and Transgendered) communities, and is run by an all-volunteer staff.

The QRD Staff currently has an opening for a volunteer to file away information as it is received. Applicants must have reliable access to ftp, and the time and desire to become familiar with the QRD's current holdings and in a timely manner file away the many files the QRD receives on a daily basis from around the world. Staff members with experience in this job are available as backup and to consult with when you have questions about where something belongs.

If you are interested, send mail to David Casti <disc@vector.casti.com>

Thank you for your consideration!

-Alan Hamilton <alan@spdcc.com> 

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Coming in future issues of Bi Women

The theme for the August/September issue:

Sex.

Some story ideas for you: How to throw a safe sex party, sex in the lesbian/bi community, sex and HIV/AIDS/STDs, celibacy. Surely you will have ideas of your own...

Possible future themes:

Bridging the Lesbian/Bi Gap Out at Work

Diversity: celebrating diversity, recognizing and eliminating racism in our community and beyond, making connections between cultures and communities.

Non-Monogamy

DEADLINE for the August/September issue:
Friday, July 8, 1993

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten) or on floppy disk (PC or Mac), and include a name and phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published, please tell us! Otherwise we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. You may contribute anonymously, or just use your first name, if you wish.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140



Making the Connections

by Cathleen Finn, Irish-American Bisexual Activist

This past weekend on Saturday, May 7, 1994, a white supremacist group gathered in Boston in support of the South Boston Allied War Veterans (hereafter "the Veterans") ongoing attempts to keep a group of bisexual, lesbian and gay people of Irish descent (GLIB) out of the St. Patrick's Day Parade. This year the Veterans canceled the parade rather than follow a permanent injunction from the Massachusetts Supreme Court prohibiting them from discriminating against GLIB. The Veterans are currently appealing to the U. S. Supreme Court.

The battle for inclusion of openly bisexual, lesbian, and gay people in the St. Patrick's Day Parade is an international struggle that started in New York in 1991. In Boston's 1992 St. Patrick's Day Parade, GLIB became the first group in history to march under its own banner as an organization made up of openly gay, lesbian, and bisexual Irish and Irish-Americans. Since then, groups in Ireland, including Cork, Dublin, and Galway have marched, and groups in the United States, including Seattle and San Francisco, have been part of their cities' St. Patrick's Day Parades. As far as I know, none of these other organizations have had to fight in court to defend their right to be included. In fact, in Cork in 1992, the gay, lesbian, and bisexual contingent won a prize for "Best Float" and for the most part was positively received. It is interesting to note that all homophobic legislation (including the sodomy law) has been overturned in Ireland, and they have the equivalent of a national civil rights law prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The white supremacists also came to Boston, and South Boston specifically, for another reason. They were coming to gather on the steps of South Boston High School to mark the one year anniversary of a racial riot that took place there. In the early seventies South Boston became known around the world as a community of whites who violently resisted the efforts of a federal judge to integrate Boston's public school system. It is no coincidence that some of the people of South Boston find parallels between the court decision of the early 1970's and the court decision of the 1990's, both forcing them to acknowledge the diversity within their own community and the larger Boston community. It is similarly no coincidence that the white supremacist group based in Mississippi is making the connections between resisting both racial equality and tolerance toward gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.

It is unfortunate that the connections being made between right-wing groups on a national level, linking racist and homophobic agendas are not yet being met with a unified national

resistance between progressive anti-racism and anti-homophobia organizations. However, for one glorious day in Boston, we did hear from a variety of progressive organizations who held a counter-demonstration with hundreds of people while a handful of white supremacists gathered in support of South Boston's latest disgrace, the cancellation of the 1994 St. Patrick's Day Parade.

As a member of GLIB and a spokesperson for the organization, I have participated with the group in the 1992 and 1993 Boston St. Patrick's Day Parades, as well as a variety of other group activities including potlucks, brunches, and Pride celebrations throughout New England. As the daughter of two Irish immigrants, being in the parades meant a great deal to me. As a member of the bisexual community, it meant a healing integration of two important facets of my identity, to be seen as both Irish-American and openly bisexual. I will never forget the feelings I had as we marched along the parade route. Limited to twenty-five in numbers, we were a living example of pride hard-won after difficult, deeply personal struggles. The ignorance and hatred we witnessed along the parade route was interjected with people who understood and supported our right to participate. Families, neighbors, and groups of friends were divided on this issue; people cheering, waving and making "thumbs up" signs standing alongside people screaming nasty slurs and "flipping us the bird".

It is challenging to "keep up the fight" as the Veterans are not directly confronted in their homophobia by community "leaders" or elected officials. It is unfortunately still more acceptable for these "leaders" to be a silent accomplices to the homophobia committed in our communities than to speak out publicly against it. This silence of our community leaders and public officials, like the silence the preceded Nazi Germany, is an ongoing capitulation to the forces of evil as represented by the Veterans and their allies, the white supremacists. The Lieutenant Governor Paul Celucci told people to keep away from South Boston when the white supremacists gathered. Perhaps "ignore them and they'll go away" is his motto, but we know from history that this approach doesn't work. A problem of this seriousness is best confronted directly, as many activists from all walks of life did this weekend. Speaking for GLIB, we thank everyone for their support and look forward to working with you as we collectively fight to secure the civil rights of everyone in our pluralistic, freedom-loving society.

GLIB's mailing address is 1151 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138. Hotline (617) 695-8051.

In the mail.....

We received a complimentary issue of Bi the Way, a very colorful newsletter published by Bi Women and Friends in Minneapolis, Minn. BWF is celebrating their second birthday. Congratulations!

Movies To Watch OUT For:

New bi film screened in Ottawa, Canada

The Ottawa, Canada area bilingual newspaper we receive Go Info, lists a screening of a movie that sounds intriguing. Crush, they say, is a sinister, compelling movie taking place in rural New Zealand, where an American woman visiting her former classmate starts to seduce her friend and his 15-year-old daughter.

Women's Music Scene

"Women's Music Plus" has produced a directory of resources in women's music and culture listing over 4,400 performers, producers, festivals and more. To order send \$15 to Women's Music Plus, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago IL 60640.

HATE UPDATE: OREGON

A Marion County (Oregon) judge ruled that the Oregon Citizen's Alliance's (OCA) proposed state-wide anti-gay rights initiative is flawed and cannot qualify to be placed on the ballot for state-wide referendum. The Oregon constitution stipulates that initiatives deal with only one subject. Since the OCA proposal deals with several subjects, such as school curriculum, restrictions on access to library books, and public spending to promote homosexuality, the judge ruled that it cannot qualify as a referendum initiative.

(And I thought it was just us Bi's who couldn't "decide which we want most.") Way to go judge!

- from *BiLines*, the newsletter of Bi? Shy? Why?, Madison, Wisconsin



Speak Out!

Write to your newsletter! Send us your letters, poetry, opinions, questions, essays, art, jokes, praise, criticism, news clippings . . .



▼
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BiVocals continued from page 1

I saw a calendar listing for a discussion on bisexuality at the Women's Center I was like a starving person seeing a sign for a free meal. I was desperate need of personal validation.

JL: I felt isolated. In recent years I had begun to meet women, and had found that the women in the bars, where I was not very happy to be going anyway, were mostly just gay, not bi, and the women in the personal ads who said they were bi didn't seem to be as bi as me. I didn't really feel as if I'd yet met the women I'd really click with, as lovers or as friends.

MD: I had recently joined a 12-step recovery program and I had just broken up with a woman. I suspected that internalized homophobia made me shy away from calling myself a lesbian. I went to a gay & lesbian coming out group at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education and, in typically Marcia style, got crushes on all the men. I was bored by most of the straight "singles" scene and I needed queer culture to survive, yet I liked boys best. I knew I was a "fag hag" but I wanted romantic satisfaction as well as gay male "girlfriends." Mostly, I was racked with guilt for having left this nice woman after so much initial enthusiasm, and I didn't want to burn anyone else that bad again by my ambivalence.

LC: I came to the Women's Center meeting because I felt very isolated as a bisexual. I had no validation that it was a viable, legitimate state of being. My identity was confused and bruised from a painful transition from a lesbian to heterosexual relationship. I felt pretty worthless and politically incorrect. I didn't fit in either camp.

LO: I had heard that there was a group that had formed out of a previous meeting at the Women's Center and I really wanted support from other bisexual women, so I went to this meeting determined to try to form a new group out of the meeting. I was tired of feeling alone.

Where did we come from? Ranging in age at the time from 24-36, all of the BiVocals had been previously involved with social change movements.

RO: I grew up "on the bus" as a "pink diaper baby" (left, liberal, activist). My mother was a community activist, and I grew up going to anti-war and civil rights demonstrations. That involvement continued through my college years. I never saw myself as a leader, but I was a regular at marches and demonstrations.

JL: I had been involved with Libertarians and Animal Rights groups, and more recently had begun speaking engagements to raise public consciousness about S/M. At the Erotic Liberation Event sponsored by Gay Community News in 1982, I had spoken as a (horrors!) female heterosexual submissive. [Lisa had spoken at the same event as a bisexual.]

MD: I was brought up to be a good little liberal

and civil rights activist by my parents, but I was further transformed politically by the killings of students at Kent State and Jackson State, the anti-Vietnam war movement and the Boston women's liberation movement, especially my consciousness raising group of Bread and Roses in 1970. Then I got involved with Science for the People and learned about Marxism and socialism which intersected with my feminism throughout the seventies. Out of this, I helped form a lefty feminist band, The New Harmony Sisterhood Band, which played in the Boston area throughout the 70s.

LC: My political involvements were the antiwar and the women's movements. I also worked on the Boston Lesbian Psychologies Collective conference and subsequent book.

LO: I was a contributor to *Gay Community News* and was very involved in gay & lesbian politics. I was aware of some bisexual organizing in Cambridge and I'd read about bisexual centers in San Francisco and Chicago, which were mixed groups. In 1981 I wrote a letter to GCN called "Let Bi Girls Be Bi Girls," in response to an earlier article, and appeared in a GCN photo wearing a button saying "Bi Girl." Surprisingly, I got no flack from it.

There were four other BiVocals, all of whom had previous involvement in feminist politics and the women's movement. Two had previously identified as lesbian.

The BiVocals began meeting regularly. Four more times, in the next months, the Women's Center sponsored discussions on bisexuality. We sent envoys to encourage the formation of additional support groups, and by the spring of 1983, there were three ongoing support groups. The BiVocals went public when we wrote a letter protesting an April Fools "Bisexuality Insurance" cartoon which appeared in GCN in April of 1983 [see page 6]. A party for bi women followed in May, and the founding meeting of BBWN in June drew 20 people. A second meeting in September of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network, drew 80 women (we expected 30!) who attempted to crowd into the living room of the Women's Center. Women were stacked on the couches, peering in the windows, and overflowing up the staircase. Apparently, our time had come!

RO: An obvious question is why the BiVocals and BBWN came about in the early 80s. Why not a decade earlier or later?

LO: BBWN was a result of the coming together of the feminist and gay movements. It was very political in its origins. Some of BBWN's founders came directly out of these movements.

LC: It was a step in the evolution of the gay movement. It seemed to reflect broad stirrings (nationally and internationally) for recognition. Perhaps with the women's and gay movements as formative influences, many women had had experiences with men and women that they needed to integrate, but there was no political/psycho-

logical structure in which they could organize. They needed an inclusive identity and a base for political/social/personal action. Also, lesbian politics at the time could be quite stringent about acceptable behaviors and definitions.

MD: I think it really happened because we were starting to deal with the "toxic waste" of the sexual assumptions of the 70s women's movement. The secret was, "We are not and were not all 100% pure lesbians," and we could no longer stay invisible and silent. To really click, we needed two sources: a pool of "Hasbians," women who had previously identified as lesbian-feminist but who wanted to love men again (in practice or in theory) and young women who had always identified as bi, and tended to have great ATTITUDE: sort of hip, punk, anarchist, renegade, and self-accepting.

What did we BiVocals get out of the BiVocals and BBWN? Lots.

RO: I finally found the validation I was looking for. The most important thing I learned as a BiVocal was learning that I could respect people who were very different from me. BiVocals took me beyond tolerance, and forced me to learn that I REALLY respect the integrity and intelligence of people whose desires, choices, and often politics were very different from my own. BBWN, much to my surprise, also served as a training ground for me as an activist. It has been through BBWN that I learned to make the transition from participant to organizer.

JL: The BiVocals was simply a small group of women who very quickly became friends, all fascinatingly different but all sharing a number of important things as well as the bisexuality that had brought us together. I could talk about every little thing because the big things were OK to talk about. It had been clear from the beginning that I could be open about my S/M identity, since I had met Lisa in that context [In fact, Lisa wrote a review in the *Village Voice* of *Coming to Power and Beyond Sadomasochism*.] Occasionally, I did wonder if some of the BiVocals were not totally comfortable with my orientation, but if so they were all nevertheless supportive and welcoming at meetings. I guess what I got out of it was a sort of Ideal of the Support Group (Urania, my women's S/M group, was open to new members, so it had a less intimate flavor).

MD: I got permission to be Bisexual as a political identity! I see now that I always wanted simple personal permission, corroboration, and mirroring from other political bisexuals. Most feminists saw bi-ness as a cultural or personal issue, not a political one. I admired most of the artists in history who were bisexual—Vita Sackville-West, Virginia Woolf, Kate Millett, Janis Joplin, etc. I saw it as a positive part of being an artist: creative, eccentric, not split into gender roles. I knew very few people like me culturally and personally. I loved antiestablishment Queer culture,

but I preferred drag queens to Meg Christian. When I looked around at my lesbian friends, I often mused, "Why be queer at all if you're going to be so boring?" I mean, with their sensible shoes and business careers and homes for two in the 'burbs? Being a bi, I wanted the best of both worlds, crushes on guys and queer edge culture, also both personal and political fulfillment.

LC: The BiVocals was a lifesaver for me. I came to it with wounded self-esteem and a sense of shame and confusion about my life choices. I was still embroiled with a difficult triangular relationship that raised every personal and political question about gender and sexuality. BiVocals were unwaveringly accepting, understanding, and loving. We were all trying to figure out our lives and how they fit into internal and external contexts and influences. Gradually, I began to heal, to trust myself, and, most significantly, to build a bisexual identity that has continued to sustain me.

LO: Love, support, solidarity, a sense of purpose, a place to clarify my ideas.

How have you changed over the past decade?

RO: I like myself. I'm secure in my identity as a bisexual, and as someone who has something unique and important to offer the world—as a writer, and as a teacher and public speaker. I feel almost ready to meet "person right" and I hope she is a woman. I'm constantly amazed at how much the bi movement has grown. It's strange to realize that I'm the same age now that the older 4 BiVocals were when we first started meeting. They seemed so WISE back then.

JL: I still identify as bisexual, with the footnote that as always my first orientation is as an S/M woman. Aiden and I got married and we are living together. I am 47 years old. I don't look it or feel it. But I do feel a deep connection with the Sixties.

MD: I'm just as bi as ever. I am quietly but definitely out everywhere—in the media, in my family, in my Radcliffe writing classes, in recovery groups, on stage, at work, and in mixed queer grassroots political groups. It's more important than 10 years ago, and also more comfortable, as I am asked to speak for groups about it and hence I get positive feedback.

LC: Since 1982 I've become more comfortable and confident about my choice of life partner and about my bisexuality. I recognize my love for women at the same time that I affirm a commitment to my marriage to a man. I feel much less conflict about having made a choice and the choice I made. I don't feel like I'm losing something I need anymore (being with a woman). I have developed parts of myself (I don't need certain things from other people the way I used to), and my capacity to relate to my partner (I can get many, if not all, of the things I need from him). I

LesGayBi Pride in Rhode Island

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Association (GLBA) of University of Rhode Island held a successful Lesbigay Pride Week during the first week of April. The theme of this year's pride week was Celebration. On March 30th, GLBA also had a table during Earth Day 94, sponsored by Students for Social Change, with info on the Civil Rights Bill, Gays in the Military and a petition for signing up for the Straight But Not Narrow Coalition.

- by Valerie Grondin, from May 1994 issue of Options, Rhode Island's Lesbian & Gay Newsmagazine

BUTTONS

Bisexual Pride

Visi BI lity

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on sale at the Bi Office.

Send

\$1

plus a stamped, self-addressed envelope (or 50¢ postage and handling) to:

BBWN
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA
02140

BiVocals cont. on page 7

The Catalyst for Bi-Vocals

2

The other issue involves printing names, addresses and/or phone numbers of people having meetings or social events at their homes. We hope to solve the first problem by finding a public space for CC meetings but for now one of our members has agreed to list her phone # and give directions to women who call. We are also considering a special Newsletter insert for members only which will contain such information. If you have any other ideas, please let us know.

Remember, confidentiality is to be respected by all members. Don't gossip about your support group or who was at the General Meeting. And watch where your Newsletter goes!

Gay Community News, April 23, 1993 —

gay-identified bisexuals

Dear GCN:

We are a group of radical gay-identified bisexual women who have been meeting together for almost a year. At the risk of seeming humorless, we would like to point out some problems with the "bisexuality insurance" cartoon which appeared in the April Fool's issue of GCN.

1) The joke seems to be directed not to but against bisexuals: most bisexuals would not find it particularly funny and most of us have found it hurtful. When we add to this our past experiences with similar incidents and the almost total lack of attention given to bisexuals in GCN, we can only conclude that one subtext of the cartoon is that bisexuals are not considered part of the gay community.

The fact that we too experience homophobic discrimination and violence in our lives isn't enough for some people. Lesbians have sometimes told us that this is because bisexuals won't commit themselves to a lesbian lifestyle or to lesbian feminist politics. We challenge the right of anyone to set these requirements. In fact, some of us are active and committed members of the "two women's community." Others find the so-called lesbian lifestyle (is there really just one?) unattractive or disagree with lesbian feminism. So do many lesbians.

We insist that all people who are sexually attracted to others of the same sex are gay. All other characteristics are secondary. And if "gay" is used to refer only to those who have consciously chosen a "gay identity," many bisexuals are gay and many homosexuals are not.

2) The cartoon perpetuates two stereotypes of bisexuals which we find particularly painful. The first is that we are really "experimenting" heterosexuals. In fact, everyone in our group strongly identifies as bisexual — even though we range from being primarily attracted to women to being primarily attracted to men — and most of us have done so for years. For many of us it is as much "all women," as the cartoon puts it, as it is for any lesbian. Obviously the real problem which some lesbians have with us is not that we don't love women but that we haven't rejected men.

The second stereotype is that we are more lacking in compassion when we end relationships than lesbians are. This is bullshit. Sometimes bisexuals do leave women for men. We also leave men for

women, women for women, and men for men. But we don't leave our lovers any more cruelly or frequently than any other group. All too often we get left ourselves. Some of us are incredibly unogamous and tenacious, others promiscuous and restless. And sometimes we are assholes, just like some lesbians.

3) The cartoon is not only directed at bisexuals. It also exemplifies an attitude towards women in the process of coming out which is all too common: if you don't know exactly what you feel and want, if you're at all ambivalent, if you're not prepared to commit yourself totally to a lesbian identity, you should stay in the closet rather than "experiment." This attitude keeps some women in the closet their whole lives. We think the lesbian community should encourage any woman who thinks she might be gay to explore those feelings. We certainly do. This doesn't mean that we don't fear rejection — everyone does. Nor do we necessarily feel less than lesbians the particular pain which accompanies being left for a man. But we recognize that this pain comes from our oppression. We owe it to women who are trying to come out not to blame them for it.

All the members of our group identify as bisexuals not because we are clinging to "heterosexual privilege" but because we are proud to affirm the full range of our desires. Bisexuals do exist. The message we get from both the lesbian/gay community and the straight world is that either we don't exist or we shouldn't. We refuse to accept this any longer. We refuse to deny ourselves or to be silent and invisible.

We understand that years of pain and anger on

both sides of the barriers which separate us from

homosexuals cannot be wiped out with a few

words. We also realize that humor might be a

necessary outlet but we doubt that jokes about

"bisexuality insurance" will help to dismantle

those barriers. And they must be dismantled.

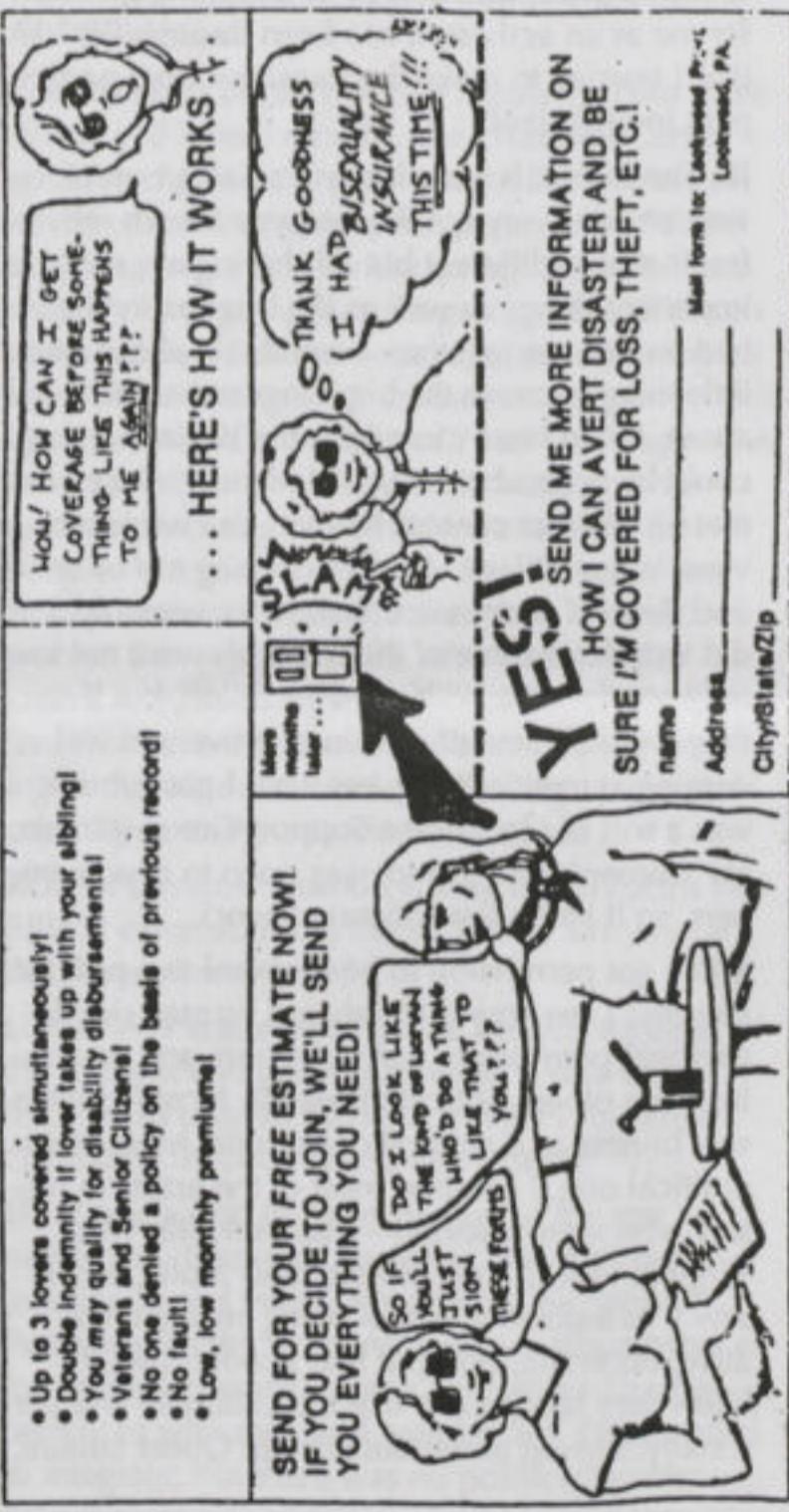
Bisexuals are not the enemy: the enemy is institutionalized heterosexuality. And we must unite against it if our movement is to grow stronger.

The BiVocals (Doris, Joanna, Linda, Lucinda,

Cambridge, MA)



BISEXUALITY INSURANCE



BiVocals *continued from page 5*

recognize now that there are tradeoffs; I don't "want it all" anymore. And now the person's physical sex is much less important than his/her personhood, which includes "feminine" and "masculine" parts. I no longer see my partner as a MAN first. I can see different facets of him more than I could in 1982. Being bisexual is a given. It is who I am sexually, even if I choose to not act on half of that equation. Since 1982, I think I am more heterosexual than I was. Like if my partner weren't there, I would probably end up with another man, but I'm not sure.

LO: I feel like a different person from the person I was ten years ago. I guess the most important change is that bisexuality is no longer a big issue or focus in my life. I'm in a monogamous relationship, not because I particularly wanted to be in a monogamous relationship, but because the person I'm with insists on complete monogamy. In addition, something in me has changed so I see a value in monogamy that I never saw before. In my personal growth, it was a step toward maturity to make the decision to not just follow my impulses wherever they led. I'm no less attracted to women or men than I was, but it's just not an issue in my life. I never expected to be in a monogamous relationship, and 10 years ago, I would have refused to even consider the possibility.

Where are we now in our lives?

RO: Living in Cambridge with my two cats, and a core of long-term and important friendships. I'm very active in the lesbigay community. I perform with Gays for Patsy, co-host the PrideTime cable television show, and do a lot of speaking, teaching, and writing. I've been body building, and still work as an administrator at Harvard. Am I happy? Yes.

JL: I am a poet and fiction writer who lives in Brighton, Mass., with my husband Aidan, three cats, and occasional visiting raccoons. Ideally, I would be a member (with him as Master) of a small harem of bisexual women. When I have time I work for Animal Rights and Erotic (especially S/M) Liberation.

MD: Today I get most of my political jollies from the Cambridge Lavender Alliance, "a progressive organization of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals." I like working on a community level. I am usually the only attending bi activist (that I know of), and I hope I'm right when I say that people trust my politics, and have added the b-word more often as time goes on. I must talk with Robyn over the phone about which group I should march with at Pride marches. Last year I started with the Lavender Alliance and slipped later into the bi gals' contingent. I still work at Harvard, am publishing here and there, performing my music infrequently, and doing some public speaking on bisexuality. To quote my own 1979 song, "No hubby (no girlfriend OR boyfriend), no house, no

car, no kid. And no regrets for what I didn't or I did."

LC: I live in the Midwest with my husband, son and daughter. I have been exploring women's spirituality, and have started to take art classes, which feels like opening a door that I closed years ago.

LO: I'm very involved with developing spiritual strengths, on healing myself and growing. I'm committed to witchcraft and to developing a powerful connection with my intuition and with the goddess. I've put aside writing and intellectual pursuits for the time being because I felt like for a long time I only existed from the neck up, and it was killing the rest of me. I live in Berkeley, in one of the most beautiful places on earth, for which I am grateful every day. I'm married to a man (oh fuck, it's true!). Most of my political work is through my job, which involves eco-psychology and environmental education, and through supporting my husband in his struggle to preserve county-funded mental health services against budget cuts.

What about the other BiVocals? Two are very happy and live locally with their female life partners. Another lives locally and recently became involved with the Boston bi community after a long hiatus. And Linda—we don't know, last we heard she was living on the West coast. Linda—call home. We'd love to hear from you!

We'll close this trip down memory lane with a song that Marcia wrote in 1983 to celebrate the BiVocal's first birthday.

The BiVocal's Song

(to the tune of "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy")

I'm a Boston-based BiVocal,
I love women, also men.
I won't be bullied and I won't be shushed,
I'll come out again and again.
We're butch and femme, we're sweet and quiet,
We're young and old, we're brash and loud,
East coast, west coast, north and south
Our sister groups sing with us:
"We're all Bisexual and Proud." □

BI SUPPORT IN AUSTRALIA

The Gamma Project in Australia was formed in 1986 to provide support for female partners of men who have sex with women and men. It is part of the Franklin Centre, in suburban Melbourne, which provides information, education workshops and support services including a support group for female partners of bisexual men.

- from the "Gamma Project Newsletter" Jan./Feb. 1994 issue



BiVocals Footnotes:

(1) Liz Highleyman, "A Brief History of the Bisexual Movement" ECBN 1993. (2) This article is a combination of two real conversations (between Lisa and Robyn, and Marcia and Robyn), and selected parts of the written responses to a letter and questionnaire which was sent to all of the BiVocals in 1993.

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SOUND BI-TE AGAINST BOXES

"... I would like to see a movement based on goals (full sexual and gender liberation) that would include everyone who desired the same goals, regardless of how they self-identify."

- from April 94 issue of "BiLines", the newsletter of the Richmond Bisexual Network (ROBIN)

Illustration of a heart with a lightning bolt through it.

First Northeast Bisexual Community Meeting Plans for the Future

by Kirsten L. Isgro and Shannon Williams

For the first time in New England, bisexual people and their allies gathered to meet, network, share resources and begin to get organized within their communities and states. On April 30, in Montpelier, roughly 40 people from Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Connecticut came together to break down the individual and collective isolation they face as bisexuals in the northeast region.

The day-long meeting was co-facilitated by Stephanie Berger and Laura Marina Perez, the northeast regional representatives of the National Bisexual Network (BiNet USA). The day began with introductions and large group discussion, followed by two 1-hour long sessions in which people met in small groups to discuss topics of concern. Issues addressed during the day included strategies and struggles of urban and rural organizing, how to set up support groups as well as networks in one's area, sex and sexual identity, and support for married people and those in "alternative" relationships. Other areas of interest were coming out issues, addressing the anti-oppression work that needs to be done within the bisexual community, and organizing a culture and arts festival. There was plenty of time to break and talk and view an on-going video project created by Jill Merkle.

A participant from Plainfield said, "I didn't know what to expect. I've been to a lot of different gatherings, but to have the opportunity to meet other bisexual people in Vermont was exciting. I was looking for kinship...the meeting went beyond my expectations."

Sharokin Betgevargiz, a participant from Burlington, liked the large group discussion that developed the meeting structure. "People were honest...in bringing out their concerns...I totally felt a positive, good connection. People spoke the same language, and I didn't have to justify myself to anyone."

Some of the ideas that came out of the community meeting were planning a regional bisexual conference in the fall, organizing a bisexual culture and arts festival in August, and creating a more cohesive and visible Vermont Bisexual network. Sharokin talked about the viable future of a bisexual community: "It's necessary for people in different communities or support groups to call each other and organize on the local level, and communicate somehow to each other."

This meeting was co-sponsored by BiNet USA. The purpose of BiNet is to collect and distribute information regarding bisexuality, to facilitate the development of bisexual community and visibility, and to work for the equal rights and liberation of bisexuals and all oppressed people. Organizers, participants, and ideas are needed for the upcoming fall conference. For information about BiNet and/or the conference, contact Laura at (617) 282-3537 or Stephanie at (617) 666-3149. To find out about the arts festival and bisexual video project, contact Jill Merkle at (802) 496-2071. ▼

The Dialog Begins

by Stephanie Berger, Northeast Representative, BiNet USA

As a beginning dialog, the first northeast community meeting was a success.

It brought together bisexuals, several straight, lesbian and gay folk, those who are undecided and those who are scared, for a day of honest discussion, questioning and connection making.

This meeting not only acted as a spring board for our next community meeting in the fall, but also helped give cohesion to the northeast region in terms of developing a broad based bisexual agenda. The meeting allowed us to share stories of our individual and regional struggles and gave us recognition for all the work we've already done and vision for the work that needs to be done in the future.

As a facilitator, it seemed to me that beneath all the topics we discussed several themes emerged: isolation, visibility, recognition and empowerment. How we feel, what we want, and how we get it, what stops or inhibits us—whether it's community, family, politics, sex or relationships. There was also much too much to discuss in just one meeting, which is why we're planning our next meeting as a two day event. If you're at all interested in finding out more, you can call me at 617-666-3149. We've talked about a possible meeting in Portland, Maine some time late fall. ▼



Unmaking *cont. from page 1*

Valentine's evening of Bisexual Love Stories to provide a space for women to do some authentic personal storytelling.

The bisexual women's support group that I started became my activism for two years, the same period of my burnout within established channels like BBWN. The lessons I learned from this support group turned out to be life lessons as well, but not in ways I'd anticipated. We did support one another, and I was shown that a group of women really can cooperate without a hierarchy. After experiences within my family and later with jobs and college groups that were variously dysfunctional, I didn't really know this was possible. The true-life democracy I felt with these eight women has left its imprint on me, and actually serves as a blueprint I can draw on, much more genuinely than when it was a mostly unlivable college ideal.

I wrote a poem recently:

*There are voices in me
That say now that you have a boyfriend
JUST FORGET
That anyone ever tried to hurt you
For having a sexual orientation
Toward women as well*

I still struggle with the injustices that make activism necessary. I almost never admitted though, during my self-appointed spokesperson days, that I was a poster child for one of our most celebrated causes: gay runaway/throw-away teenagers. The terror of facing these fresh ghosts kept them something I was constantly fleeing, whether by changing jobs and homes every few months or joining BBWN and never crying out for help on my own behalf. Perhaps the communities I've joined have not been prepared for me either. I was always on the defensive, and yet always feeling exposed. We really don't yet have all of the resources in place to heal the world, especially in this still-freaky category of bisexual.

Our journeys, however, may become artwork. The lives we live, the political analyses we dream, the bonds of friendship that we delicately weave, the lovers that we promise ourselves to, the psychic upheavals that we survive, these are all ways we mend the planet, if we are fortunate. What will my attempts at survival evolve into years from now?

Almost all of my friends now are bisexual women, except for my male lover and a scattering of very supportive others. None of us met, though, through bisexual organizing. We were certainly drawn to each other however within the various different contexts in which we met. For me, there is a lack of the urgency among us that emerges within formal activist communi-

ties, or even apolitical gay ghettos, to talk about our sexual identities. It creeps in though, as we grope for language to articulate our everyday lives. It excites us when we make connections about the politics of our personal struggles. It feels strange that we have these bonds without "organizing" around them. Mostly it is healing to have friends that reflect my life back to me in some way without provoking constant defensiveness in me.

Bisexual activism and all planetary healing will always have some place in my heart. I still feel like my whole life is activism, my survival is activism. And it is an active process, confronting and transforming the world's demons in their many forms. To the bisexual women's community: please keep a place open for me. My life overlaps with your world, even if it happens in ways that none of us could have ever predicted. ▽



STRESSED OUT? A MASSAGE CAN HELP!

When you feel out of sorts, a one-hour Swedish Massage Session can make you feel better. With this coupon you pay \$25.00 for an introductory non-sexual Swedish Massage Session (usually \$40.00 a session*) that can help relieve mental and physical fatigue, improve circulation and body tone and help you relax to make you feel your best.

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* N.E.N.A. and BANG Members get \$10.00 off regular price when card presented

RELAXATION
STRESS REDUCTION

Thinking of Moving?

Are you:

- Looking for a place in the Boston area starting in August or September?
- Bi or Bi-friendly? (And who else would be reading this newsletter?)
- Interested in living in a cozy, smoke-free, **VERY CHEAP** (\$226/mo. + utilities), T accessible, apartment in Dorchester with a fun, communicative, flexible 28 y.o. Bi woman?

If so let's talk. My wonderful roomie is moving to the "City Bi the Bay" in Sept., so if this living situation sounds interesting call me (Linda) at (617) 282-3537. I hope to hear from you soon!!!

Ways to Come
Out as Bisexual:

- **Subscribe to both Playboy and Playgirl.**
- **Place a full page ad announcing your sexuality in a local newspaper. If that is too expensive then you might consider putting a small notice in the Births section.**
- **"John and I are celebrating our 2nd anniversary tonight." "But I thought you celebrated that last week." "No, that was my 5th anniversary with Mary."**
- **Get a bisexual pride design tattoo on your forearm.**
- **Make a "Bisexual Pride" banner for a pride march and leave it lying around your home when visitors call.**
- **Subscribe to several bisexual newsletters. Read them on the bus while commuting to work or college.**
- **Order two portions of dessert at the staff canteen and, if asked about it, say "I like to have my cake and eat it too."**

*- from BIFROST,
©1992 Raymond Lynch*

A History of the Boston Bisexual Community

by Liz A. Highleyman

The Boston area is home to one of the largest and most active bisexual communities in the world. The Boston bi community was also one of the earliest to evolve. Many factors may have contributed to this phenomenon, including the area's substantial student population, its large gay and lesbian communities, and its relatively liberal political atmosphere. Unlike many other areas that have started mixed bi groups in the past few years, groups in Boston have tended to be more specialized (including groups for bi women, bi married men and bi political activists). Boston's first all-inclusive mixed-gender group began relatively recently.

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network (BBWN) evolved from a support group called the BiVocals in 1983. It is one of the oldest existing bisexual groups, and currently has a mailing list of over 600 members. BBWN has always had a feminist perspective, and many of its members (both now and in the past) have come from feminist and/or lesbian communities and movements. BBWN sponsors social events and educational forums and encourages political activism against all forms of oppression. Through its introductory meetings at the Cambridge Women's Center, BBWN facilitates the formation of support groups (which over the years have included groups for formerly lesbian-identified bi women, married bi women and an ongoing bi women's rap group). Over the past year, coinciding with its tenth anniversary, BBWN has engaged in a process of examination, outreach and reorganization, and has gained a number of new active members.

In 1984 the Boston Bisexual Men's Network (BBMN) was born. This group brought men

together for support and social activities, and also published a newsletter ("BBMN News"). In 1992 BBMN took a hiatus due to decreased interest and a lack of men willing to take on responsibilities. Discussion has been ongoing since then about reviving the group. There is also a bi married men's group of long standing. Boston is typical of many bisexual communities in that there have historically been considerably more active women than men, although this balance is shifting, in part due to the influx of relatively equal numbers of young men and women into the movement.

In 1985 the Boston-based East Coast Bisexual Network (ECBN) was formed as an umbrella organization for regional bi groups and individuals. Although its name was "East Coast," ECBN was both more narrow and more broad in its scope. It was more narrow in the sense that its activities such as conferences and retreats were geared toward people in the northeast U.S. It was more broad in the sense that it served as a resource for bisexuals throughout the U.S. and the world. To reflect this broader scope, ECBN changed its name to the Bisexual Resource Center in 1993. The BRC acts as a financial conduit and advisor, publishes bisexual literature and the International Directory of Bisexual Groups, maintains the International Bisexual Archives, and operates the Bisexual Community Resource Office in Boston.

In the summer of 1988, having been energized by the 1987 gay and lesbian March on Washington, several activists who had been involved in gay/lesbian and progressive politics formed a group to focus on bisexual political activism. The Bisexual Committee Engaging in Politics (BiCEP) produced educational materials, held bi visibility actions, participated in demonstrations with gay and AIDS activist groups, and worked to involve the larger bi community in progressive political issues. In 1990 over commitment and a dearth of new members led BiCEP to take a "hiatus" that continues to this day. Several attempts have been made to revive the group, but an independent bisexual political action group has not been a high priority for the Boston community, many of whom prefer to do their political work within gay/lesbian or gay/lesbian/bisexual contexts.

In the summer of 1991 a group of bisexuals came together to form Biversity Boston, a mixed gender group with a focus on social activities and support. The founders of Biversity including several people who were new to the community and several others who were not satisfied with only single-sex groups. The new group created a space for transgendered bisexuals and for those who either do not identify on the basis of gender or who feel that gender is not particularly important. While

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many bi women were glad to see a mixed sex group, many also felt the need to maintain a woman-only group with a feminist focus. Biversity currently has combined postal and electronic mailing lists totaling about 300 people. Biversity has taken over from ECBN/BRC the coordination of several Boston-area activities such as the monthly (now bi-monthly) brunch, the informal Bi-Space rap group and the BiFest conference which takes place in conjunction with June's Pride festivities each year. Recently a bisexual writers and artists group and a bi coming-out support group have formed.

At the same time as specifically bisexual groups have grown in both size and number, bisexuals have also been increasingly active and visible in gay/lesbian and gay/lesbian/bisexual groups. Such groups include the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau, the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans, ACT UP/Boston, and queer groups at several local colleges and universities. There is also a growing bisexual awareness and self-identification in groups that are not associated with gay and lesbian communities, for example progressive political groups, pagan and alternative spirituality communities, leather-s/m groups, and among computer networkers and science fiction fans (several electronic news groups relating to bisexuality have a large membership from Boston/New England).

The New England area is grouped as a region of the national bisexual network BiNet USA, and efforts are ongoing to consolidate regional participation and representation. The region has two representatives (Stephanie Berger and Laura Perez), and recently held a regional networking meeting in Vermont.

Many individuals consider themselves part of the Boston bisexual community even if they are not members of any specific bisexual groups. Over the past year and a half, three community meetings have been held to bring together bisexuals from existing groups and those who are not members of specifically bi groups, in order to get a common sense of what is available to bisexuals in the area, and what we want that we currently lack. Discussion has also focused on how to reach out to more bisexuals, relations between bi and gay/lesbian communities, and what we see as a "bi agenda," both locally and on regional and national levels; this process is ongoing. The growth and diversification of the local bisexual community will no doubt continue as we face the new challenges of the next century. ▼

Controversy over Bi TV

In the Feb. 19, 1994 issue of T.V. Guide on pages 33-34 was the headline: Tom & Roseanne Battle ABC over Gay Kissing Scene. For those of you who don't watch t.v., the storyline involves Roseanne going to a lesbian bar with Sandra Bernhard and her lover (played by Mariel Hemingway) and after dancing with Mariel being kissed by her! The audience, unprepared for the kiss, reacted with a loud "Owww!" (Jealous, I guess.) In response, BBWN co-founder Marcia Deihl sent the following letter to t.v. guide:

A scene which is turning out to be the most controversial plot ever to appear on "Roseanne" can only be called a BISEXUAL plot. On a show which has easily dealt with gay men (Martin Mull's character), Lesbians (Sandra Bernhard and her various girlfriends), family abuse, unmarried teen pregnancy, and drugs, the ABC network has balked over the following: A straight woman, played by a woman with a bisexual history in real life (Roseanne), is kissed by a lesbian, played by a straight woman in real life (Mariel Hemingway), and is asked if she enjoyed it by a bisexual woman, played by a self-named lesbian in real life (Sandra Bernhard). Hmmmmmm... we're queerer than gay men or lesbians to ABC! Note the title: "Gay Kissing Scene." If it's not a bisexual kissing scene, involving all these bisexuals (in real life or in character), I don't know what is.

Thanks muchly Marcia - we'll be waiting to hear if T.V. Guide responds.

- Laura Sachs



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NAPWA provides free AIDS funding info by fax

The National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) announces a new fax-on-demand system that will feature funding alerts for public and private grants related to HIV disease and AIDS. NAPWA Fax is designed to provide timely information, free-of-charge, to care providers and people living with HIV disease—24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In addition, concise information is available about health and treatment needs, insurance and benefits, legal issues, and timely and comprehensive information about living well with HIV disease. Daily news briefs and NAPWA publications such as *Medical Alert* are also available on the fax system.

NAPWA Fax documents summarize diverse topics, include listings of additional resources and references, and will be updated on a monthly basis to reflect the most current information available.

NAPWA is pleased to be offering this service. We encourage interested individuals to call NAPWA Fax at 202.789.2222.



ALL Bi, MYSELF

By
Katherine Douthit

Bi-gone Days: A Herstorical Tale

I hanker after Womenfolk AND Menfolk too - on accounta my ma givin' birth to my naked self on the very Continental Deevide! There I was - a baby - a lookin' across a both sides o' the country 'n' eyein' both Oceans at onces. I was a wantin' to foller the meltin' snow to East AN' West!

Ma said I jest wanted to eat cake an' have it too. Pa said I'd be after critters. He held it next. "Uz just a step from havin' a BI-DAUGHTER to gettin' a BISON-IN-LAW."

But what about Lulu? What fer Big Jim?

Marry one 'n' fergit t'other!? Life was rough on the Ol' Schism Trail. I takend ta gettin' drunk with the buffalo.

— Till... fate takend a hand.... I bakenda a apple pie fer Big Jim —

When he went 'n' popped the question!

Mattie Jo - Do you Love Lulu?

BUT JEST THEN — I heered a ruckus in my horseshoe driveway - BIG OL' GRIZZLY ATTACKIN LULU. — WELL SIR - I reached Big Jim a fork - an' I lassoed that Grizzly - savin' my darlin' Lulu!

We three had us a fine weddin!

An' ther' was 2 cakes as big as twin peaks - one ta eat 'n' one ta have!

THE END

This makes a
Kid FRUST-R-RATED!

I Shaked in ma boots
fer Lulu And Big Jim!

And So - I
growed up with
mad hankerins.

An' Fore you knowed it - I'uz
workin' fer the telegraph -

I throwed
2 Lassos
at onces -
done the
work o' 2!

People brung
me messages,
I'd tap 'em
out in code -
Then I'd hafta
hightail it to
wherever the
message went -
so's I could
decode it
again, see?!

Dear Potential Friend/Lover,

June 26, 1994 marks the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York City that launched the Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Rights Movement. As part of the enormous coming-together planned (Gay Games, March on the United Nations, rally in Central Park, etc.), the New York Area Bisexual Network is hosting the **1994 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CELEBRATING BISEXUALITY** on Saturday, June 25 from 9am - 7pm at the Humanities High School, 351 W 18th Street between 8th and 9th Avenues.

Speakers and workshop leaders include: Elise Matthesen, Lani Kaahamanu, Fritz Klein and Robyn Ochs

One floor will be devoted to a day-long festival with performers, artists, craftspeople, vendors and all kinds of goodies. Another floor will hold numerous workshops and discussion groups with

lots of space for ad hoc networking (men's space, women's space, regional and other interest groups, quiet/meditation space).

The conference is fully wheelchair accessible. We are arranging for sign language interpreters — anyone with special needs should contact us ASAP.

PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD!

Twenty-five years ago, the lesbian and gay movement was born.

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING THE RIGHTS OF EVERY PERSON TO A FULL EXPRESSION OF OUR VASTLY DIVERSE EXPERIENCES, DREAMS AND DESIRES ...and in what may be remembered as the most awesome explosion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, drag and transgender energy the world has ever seen!

See You In June! ... and thanks in advance for SPREADING THE WORD! -- from the ICCB

Fight AIDS/ Raise the Rainbow!

You can help fight AIDS by carrying the world's largest rainbow flag in the Stonewall 25 march on the U.N. You can take part with a \$50 donation to the Stadtlanders Foundation and every dollar you donate will be distributed to AIDS organizations nationwide. To register call 1-800-NYC-1994.

9AM-7PM
on Saturday,
June 25, 1994
at Humanities H.S.
351 W 18th Street
(between 8,9 Aves.)
In Greenwich Village,
New York City, New York

1994 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CELEBRATING BISEXUALITY (ICCB '94)

A part of
BI PRIDE '94
(in conjunction
w. Stonewall 25)
Speakers! Crafts!
Singers! Workshops!
Poets! Rabble Rousers!
A day you'll never forget!

- Twenty-five years ago, police raided a gay bar in Greenwich Village. But patrons of the Stonewall would tolerate no more harassment, fear, and intimidation. Instead of running and hiding, they stayed and fought. Their rebellion launched the lesbian, bisexual, and gay rights movement.
- Come to New York to mark this historic anniversary. Join us for a full weekend of remarkable events -- the BiNet USA meeting on Friday, the Saturday Bisexual Conference, the Sunday March on the United Nations. Meet fellow bi's and our supporters from around the world, country, or block!

FOR A REGISTRATION FORM, SEND SASE TO:
ICCB '94 - Registration, PO Box 497
Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108
or e-mail skyler@panix.com

TO LEAD A WORKSHOP OR SELL THINGS, CALL:
ICCB Info Line, 212-592-3698

TO PROVIDE OR OBTAIN HOUSING, CALL:
Stonewall Housing Committee, 212-439-1077
FOR TRAVEL/ACCOMMODATIONS, CALL:
800-SW25-NYC

OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BI GROUP/REPRESENTATIVE:

BI 
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Ongoing Events

First Mondays:

Support Group for Anti-Racist White Women, 6:30-8:30pm at the Women's Theological Center, 140 Clarendon St., 6th fl., Boston. No charge, donation requested. Info: (617) 536-8782.

Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group, 7:30-9:30pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge. All women welcome. Info, topics: (617) 354-8807.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Freedom Trail Band Rehearsals. Concert and marching band, no auditions. 7:30-9:30pm. Location and info: Kathy (617) 236-5978.

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bisexual Issues Rap Group at the New Haven Women's Center, 614 Orange St., (corner Bishop) New Haven, Conn. Call to specify wheelchair access or ASL interpreting needs. Voice (203) 776-2658, TTY and voice (203) 397-2381.

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

1st and 3rd Wednesdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual. A free informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 338-9595.

▼
▼
▼
(continued on next page)

Housing for Stonewall 25

A block of hotel rooms is available NOW to all people interested in attending Stonewall 25, the Gay Games, and other related events, as part of BiNet USA, a national coalition of bisexual activists.

Where: The Alcott Residence Hotel, 27 72nd Street West (72nd and Central Park), New York City, NY

Cost: \$139/night for 1-2 people (including \$16 tax)

\$179/night for 3-4 people (including \$21 tax) (note: credit cards are not accepted by Alcott)

\$150 deposit per person required.

\$250 cancellation fee 60 - 30 days in advance of arrival. Non-refundable if cancelled less than 30 before your scheduled arrival date.

The Alcott is a residence hotel, located next to Central Park. All rooms are suites, with a bedroom, bath and kitchenette.

Dates:

June 17-22, 15 rooms are available

June 23-26, 30 rooms are available

June 27-July 3, 20 rooms are available

(more rooms may be available if this block fills quickly)

How to Reserve Your Room:

Call: Carlson Travel, 9:30am - 6pm EST weekdays, 1-800-832-0304

10am - 2pm EST Saturdays

Travel Agent: Larry Eckart

Now that Pride celebrations are just around the corner, you may be interested in wearing your Bi Pride on your chest.

For just \$15 (or \$14 if you come to the Bi Office) you get a Bisexual Pride t-shirt in black or deep purple sizes small to xx-large. Please indicate size and color with order. Make check out to

BBWN and send to:

**BBWN, attn. Stephanie/T-shirts,
95 Berkeley St., Suite 613, Boston,
MA 02116.**

Order NOW!

EUROPRIDE 94

The third Europride will be held in Amsterdam from June 15 to June 25 with this year's slogan as "The Dutch Way of Gay."

We've heard the final 4 days especially are not to be missed, as over 100,000 people are expected to show! The Europride Gayline Hotelreservations phone number is: 31 70 317 7088, Fax: 31 70 320 2611. Tickets for all the indoor events can be reserved by calling: 31 20 6 211 211.

BiCamp 1994

August 12-14



Red Mill Brook National Forest
Southern Vermont

Remember those summer days at camp when you were a kid? Wouldn't it have been more fun if you could have been open about your sexuality? Wouldn't it have been great to have had a choice about whether to wear a bathing suit? Don't you wish the camp counselors had told erotic stories around the campfire?

You can have all this and more at BiCamp 1994. Camp begins on Friday evening, August 12th and runs through Sunday afternoon on the 14th. Campers must provide their own tent, food, and transportation (sharing is encouraged). Facilities are minimal (but so is the price). Basically, what you get is a place to pitch your tent, a fire pit, fresh water, beautiful wilderness on the Appalachian Trail, and the company of a few dozen other bisexual and bi friendly people for a fun summer weekend. Clothing-optional swimming is just a short drive away at the Harriman Reservoir (aka "The Ledges") - New England's premier naturist fresh water swimming location.

All this for the low price of \$15 to \$35. Biversity Boston asks campers to contribute according to their ability. The sliding scale is designed to allow those with minimal resources to attend, while still providing enough money for overhead, such as mailings, trash bags, wood for the evening fire, etc.

Please send your name, address and phone number, with a check payable to Wayne Bryant (Biversity doesn't have a bank account) as soon as possible to Biversity Boston, 95 Berkeley St., Suite 613, Boston, MA 02116 (we may need to limit the number of campers, depending on the response). A mailing will be sent to all registered campers by July 15th, providing further details including travel directions and suggestions for what to bring.

CALENDAR, from page 1216

June 24 ♦ Friday

BiNet USA Annual Meeting

10am - 4pm at the New York Society for Ethical Culture. Manhattan, New York, 2 West 64th Street (between Central Park West and Broadway) (Columbus Circle Subway Stop).

Join us as the Bisexual movement celebrates the 25th anniversary of Stonewall. Share in the sense of community and power one gets from working with like minded people on a just cause. Meet local, regional and national bisexual activists. Put your mark on the future of a bisexual agenda. Help plan regional organizing and strategies for optimum impact in ending discrimination based on sexual orientation.

All members are welcome to attend. If you are not yet a member dues are \$1 for every \$1,000 of your income, more if you can, less if you can't.

You can join the day of the meeting or send your name, address and phone number to BiNet USA, PO Box 7327, Langley Park, MD 20787-7327. If you are planning on going to the meeting please indicate so as well.

June 25 ♦ Saturday

International Conference Celebrating Bisexuality

New York City. Info: (212) 592-3698. See page 13.

World's End Mountain Bike Trip and Picnic.

Hingham. Meet at information booth, 12 noon at entrance to parking lot. One of the most scenic 8-mile bike loops in Massachusetts. Easy ride along the water. Bring picnic lunch. Call Susan Santucci at (617) 354-3599 for directions and carpool information to Hingham.

June 26 ♦ Sunday

Stonewall 25: International March on the United Nations to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People

New York City. Info: (212) 626-6925

July 3 ♦ Sunday

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space.

July 6 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See June 1.

July 8 ♦ Friday

**BiWomen submissions deadline for the August/
September issue!! Be kind to your humble
editors and SUBMIT EARLY! Thanks!!**

July 9 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Women's Potluck Brunch. Noon at Robyn's in Central Square, Cambridge. Directions: Robyn at (617) 495-8476.



July 11 ♦ Monday

BiWomen volunteer night. Type articles for the BiWomen newsletter, read the mail, make phone calls, or just chat and eat the FREE MUNCHIES!! Please come! 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Info: (617) 338-9595.

July 13 ♦ Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

July 16 ♦ Saturday

First Bi Brunch. 11am at Au Bon Pain in Harvard Square, Cambridge (MBTA Red Line).

July 20 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See June 1.

July 25 ♦ Monday

BBWN newsletter stuffing volunteer night. Free anecdotes, gossip, unsolicited advice, jokes, fun! Help us get the newsletter out to those who need it. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Info: (617) 338-9595.

July 31 ♦ Sunday

Sunday Bi Brunch. 1:30pm at Rasmus, 129 Jersey St. in the Fenway area (MBTA Green "D" line, Fenway stop). Call Rasmus at 266-2928 for directions.

August 9-14 ♦ Tuesday-Sunday

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. Info: send SASE to W.W.T.M.C., Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458, or call (616) 757-4766.

August 12-14 ♦ Friday-Sunday

Bi Camp 1994. Red Mill Brook National Forest, Southern Vermont. Go camping in the beautiful wilderness on the Appalachian Trail, in the company of a few dozen other bisexual and bi friendly people for a fun summer weekend. Bring your own camping equipment and food. Clothing-optional swimming is just a short drive away. Sliding scale \$15-35. Info: Bi Office (617) 338-9595.

Looking Ahead ...

November 17-20 ♦ Thursday-Sunday

InQuery/InTheory/InDeed: Sixth North American Conference on Lesbian, Gay, and BISEXUAL Studies; University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. ▼

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Cambridge, MA 02140

Ongoing Events

(continued from
previous page)

3rd Thursdays

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers

Bureau Meeting. 8pm at the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. Free, open to public. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.



The Bi Office

is the Bisexual Resource Office, 95 Berkeley Street, Suite 613, Boston. (617) 338-9595

For ongoing events, see page 15.

CALENDAR

June 3 ♦ Friday

Meet and Greet Local 'Zine

Publishers. 7:30pm at Grand Opening Store in Brookline (they sell books and sexual material, mostly for women). Among the 'zine publishers appearing: Karen of Bi Girl World; Jennifer of Switch Hitter; and Anna of Mousie. In the Arcade Building. Bring erotic writings and illustrations if you want.

June 1 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. A free informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 338-9595.

Support the Boston Bisexual Women's Network – and help us keep the newsletter coming!

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\$0-20 (pay what you can) _____

\$20-30 (suggested) _____

\$30-100 _____

Send this form along with your check to:

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Cambridge, MA 02140

June 4 ♦ Saturday

BBWN Potluck Brunch. 11:30am at Susan Santucci's in Cambridge, near Mount Auburn Cemetery. All women welcome! Directions: 354-3599.

Worcester (Mass.) Pride March

Pre-Pride Swing Gala.

A very special evening of swing and ballroom dancing, and the season finale of Swingtime. With Cheek to Cheek, New England Premiere lesbian, gay and bisexual swing orchestra! Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. in Cambridge. Creative Semi-Formal. \$8 advance tickets, \$10 at the door. Limited on-site parking available, \$3. Free refreshments. 8:45pm, with free beginners swing and waltz lesson 8pm. Tickets or info: (617) 523-3772 ("Barb's Daycare").

June 5 ♦ Sunday

AIDS Action Committee's Walk for Life

June 8 ♦ Wednesday

The Flirtations, along with the Northampton singing duo **Justina and Joyce** appear at Springfield Technical Community College, Bldg. 2, Scibelli Hall, 7:30pm. Sponsored by STCC Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Alliance. Tickets \$10 in advance (from Student Activities Office), \$12 at the door. Info: (413) 781-7822, ext. 3828.

June 11 ♦ Saturday

Boston Pride Day!!

Bi Pride Brunch. 9-11am at Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St. in Copley Square. Sliding scale \$4-10. Volunteers welcome and appreciated. Call Matthew Fishman at (617) 894-5372 for info or to volunteer to help.

June 15 ♦ Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See June 1.

June 17-25 ♦ Friday-Saturday

Gay Games IV, New York City.

June 18 ♦ Saturday

First Bi Brunch. 11am at Johnny D's on Holland St. in Davis Square, Somerville (MBTA Red Line). Just show up, locate other bi folks and have brunch together.

CALENDAR continues on page **15**

The theme for this issue of BiWomen is...

Some Thoughts on Bisexual Sex

by Cecilia Tan

When I heard the newsletter topic was going to be "sex," of course I jumped at the chance to write something on my favorite topic. But then I found myself with a dilemma. Just what is "bisex" and what did I want to say about it? And so I got to thinking of that stereotypical bi-sexual experience, the Threesome.

Threesomes maybe be the most stereotypical way people think of bisexuality and bi sex merely because it's the only time when you can look at a person and it will be OBVIOUS. "Look, Marge, she's in bed with a man and a woman. I reckon she must be one of them bi-sex-shuas." And besides, it's what all those very chic "Bi" porn flicks might lead one to believe.

(Aside: the movies, like Bi-Coastal, one of the many with a bad pun on "bi" in the name, tend to have all manner of gender pairings and groupings, but still suffer from the same problem as other porn, which is, it bores me to tears... but back to the subject of sex...).

Threesomes can, in fact, be a very wholesome and enjoyable experience for the enterprising and energetic bi! But there are all kinds of issues to consider about the old *menage a trois*. For example, if you think it's hard to find a date on Saturday night, imagine finding TWO?! (Unless an adventurous couple finds YOU, of course.) And what if your futon isn't big enough? There's also a higher level of fumbling about as you each maneuver around. What to do?

Make sure everyone participating knows what is going to happen ("no, really, I thought they just wanted a backrub" will not cut it). It may help to establish some dynamics first. For example, is the het couple you've been friends with for years finally going to "do" you the way they've been dreaming of for years? Which of the three of you will be the "focus" or will you "take turns"? As the bi between two opposite sex partners, you may be the "glue" that sticks them together, or

Bisexual Sex continues on page 4

Remembering Joanna

For those of you who first got to know a BiVocals member named Joanna in the last issue, we have sad news. Joanna L. died suddenly and unexpectedly at age 47 in early June, 1994. Four of the remaining BiVocals met Sunday, July 10 for a get-together and memorial moment for this creative, daring, and unconditionally loving woman. She was a bisexual feminist, a writer and poet, an S-M activist, an animal lover, a musician, a wife, a naturist, and the ultimate free spirit. We honor and remember our sister with great love and sadness.

- Marcia D.

Toward Bi Inclusivity: the Iowa Queer Studies Conference

By Brett Beemyn

In the past few years, important gains have been made towards bisexual inclusion and recognition in the entity once referred to almost exclusively as the "lesbian and gay" rights movement. Most noticeable is the (re)naming of local queer organizations and newspapers to mention bisexuals and the including of bisexuals in the name of last year's national March on Washington. Often these changes, though, have been little more than token gestures; the names may be different, but the same old bi-exclusive thinking remains. For example, bisexual activists had to wage a national campaign just to be included in the title of the March on Washington, and then we were referred to only as "bi"—as if the majority of the March's lesbian and gay leadership wanted to have as little to do with us as possible.

More substantial progress, however, is slowly being made in an area well-known for ignoring bisexuality in the past: the academic terrain of Queer Studies. Although many bisexuals consider themselves to be queer, the discipline has often marginalized or dismissed our experiences

Queer Studies *continues on page 10*

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Volunteers of the Month

Rosalie
Heidi "was here" M.
Lynne Jacoby
Linda B.
Kathleen
Claire M.
Laura L. Sachs
Stephanie Berger
Katherine Holden
Gail Z.
Laura Marina Perez
Robyn Ochs
Mignonne
Katherine
Kathrine Douthit
[REDACTED]

Nancy B.
Julie Eastin

BiWomen is published bi-monthly.

Newsletter Team

for this issue:

Kathleen Hepburn
Linda Blair
Stephanie Berger
Rosalie
Heidi M.
Lynne
Kathleen Hepburn
Linda Blair
Stephanie Berger
Laura Sachs
Robyn Ochs

A message from
the Bisexual Resource Center...

The Bisexual Resource Center Needs Your Help

The Bisexual Resource Center (BRC) is a non-profit educational organization providing resources on bisexuality. It is also the home of Biversity Boston, the Boston Bisexual Women's Network, the Gay and Bisexual Married Men's Group, and the Bisexual Coming Out Group. The Center offers services and materials to individuals who are working to understand bisexuality. For bisexual groups, the BRC provides worldwide organizational support and information. The BRC is also home to international archives of books, newsletters, articles, magazines, and audio/video tapes on bisexuality.

The BRC is in need of money to keep the office open. Without the office, most of the programs listed above would cease to exist, new programs like an international speakers bureau and a bisexual media watch program would not be possible, and the Boston community would lose the home that helped it become one of the most successful bisexual communities in the world.

Please make out a check to ECBN (our legal non-profit name) and return to:
Bisexual Resource Center, Box 639,
Cambridge, MA 02140. ▽

BBWN Financial Statement January 1 through June 30, 1994

Balance forward: 1/1/94	\$ 3901.27
EXPENSES:	
Printing	1102.98
Postage	228.98
Advertisement	45.00
Merchandise purchased	342.00
Bulk mail permit	75.00
Contribution toward rental of office	250.00
Bad check charges (bad check to BBWN)	60.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	2103.96
INCOME:	
Dues	1865.00
Advertising	45.00
Merchandise	524.60
Events	24.74
Bank interest	20.17
TOTAL INCOME	2479.51
Balance as of 6/30/94	4276.82

- submitted by Robyn Ochs

Coming in BiWomen

The theme for the October/November issue:

Bridging the Lesbian/Bi Gap

Possible future themes:

Out at Work Diversity Non-Monogamy

DEADLINE for the October/November issue:

Friday, September 9, 1994

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten) or on floppy disk (PC or Mac), and include a name and phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published, please tell us! Otherwise we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. You may contribute anonymously, or just use your first name, if you wish.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen
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Cambridge, MA 02140



All articles and art appearing in this newsletter are copyrighted by the authors and artists.

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

FREE MEN

by Maya Kaya

Scott was not the first Freeman that I kissed. Though at 16, I had a hard time thinking of men, let alone free ones. The ones my age were all boys. Besides, I'd already managed to convince myself that no one was free to be with me and that they would not want to anyway. And my sexuality was anything but free. Tight, knotted, raging and terrified are more to the quick: and it certainly wasn't mine.

Then again, I thought of Greg Freeman as more than a boy. Certainly when I saw him at a high school reunion a few years ago I did. His reddish golden locks were longer and he had filled out some too — no longer skinny, he was a muscular and taunt man. And I remember thinking "Damn Maya, you have good taste" and wishing I could kiss him.

I remember wishing I could kiss him before he'd asked me to the prom, and even more so afterwards. He insisted we were just friends though. And while there were lots of lingering hugs, there were no kisses. Not until over a year later, when home from college for some holiday, he called me up and asked me to dinner. Then he took me home and kissed me all over.

Scott Freeman and I, on the other hand, kissed almost immediately, and it was delicious. I'd noticed him a few days before as someone "I would have been attracted to years ago" which is my internal line about good looking, outgoing, a little bit too self-confident men — because that's what Fred was. And I've grown up now, no more of that.

But Scott reappeared minutes after I finished a workshop about facing your fears of the opposite sex. I didn't feel I'd gotten much from it, but as I soon discovered, I was fearless. I don't remember what we talked or laughed about but we were soon skipping along completely engrossed in our smiles and each other. I felt drunk with the sun, Scott's attention — and my freedom.

We wandered down to the lake and found ourselves holding each other. Silence. Electricity. Hearts pounding. Too nervous even for laughter now.

I pulled back without letting go completely.

"I want to ask you something, but you have to promise not to go away."

"O.K." Scott's voice was soft, scared and incredibly sexy.

I hesitated. Now I was scared. "Promise?"

"I promise."

"If I kiss you, will it be the first kiss you've had in four months?"

For an answer I received Scott's warm wet lips

on mine tenderly. We lingered there drinking each other in. This time he pulled back.

"Wow, that took guts!"

The rest of the afternoon was dreamlike. Timeless. The lake and the trees and my body against Scott's were real. Magical. We shared laughter, tears, kisses and words we'd never told anyone before. The universe was contained within our bodies and revolved solely around kissing, touching, tasting, speaking and desiring. I found a voice that afternoon I didn't know I had. I found a connection I had come to doubt I was capable of. I found a man—a free man—desiring me as I did him, speaking his feelings and his fears, and kissing me again and again.

As the sun began to set, we left the magic and returned to the world.

The top buttons of my shirt were unbuttoned. I reached to button them, and then had thoughts I'd never had before.

"Scott? Will you button these?"

He looked at me as if I'd just asked him to make love to me. His fingers shaking and his breath audible, he buttoned my shirt.

I was completely undone. I wanted more.

"I love it when you ask for what you want."

"I want you."

And my lips closed on his. Hungry. And secure that I would be satiated. ▼

L e t t e r s

Sisters at BBWN;

I've included ten dollars as a price that's affordable for me right now; my hope is to send more upon renewal.

I was visiting a friend in Chicago who had one of your newsletters. I found it informative and the personal stories inspiring.

I've lived as a feminist lesbian identified woman for 12 years and over the last two have felt feelings and thoughts stirring where men are concerned. I totally support women who identify as bi, however, not until I educated myself regarding bi-phobia. Now I want to be truthful and visible as bi-natured as I've been as a lesbian, yet find much resistance internally to the possible loss of women in my lesbo circles. There are supportive, sympathetic sisters and I know about the prejudice and bi-phobia as well....

My roommate is in a similar process so I would like the newsletter to be addressed to her as a gift.

Thanks for your courage and your work.

In sisterhood,
Tree

Words,
that hung around, for
days
straining the string that
held me
straight, till it snapped,
dropping me
like an empty coat.
Your long woolen coat
that fell, when I climbed
into the closet down-
stairs, where
winter clothes hide for
months.
I pushed away boots,
folded myself
into a corner, waited in
the dark
for you to find me.

- Lynne Jacoby



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Bisexual Sex continued from page 1

you may feel a bit on the outside of their established relationship. What about you and your same sex lover finding an opposite sex third? A whole new dynamic to explore! Establish the parameters first, though, before you jump into the sack. Things like who gets to penetrate whom and with what are good to know! There's no one "script" or formula for a successful threesome. Keep the lines of communication open. Safe sex, allergies, and all the things you would discuss with any potential partner become even more important to discuss when you add more people to the equation. Safe sex means emotional safety, too. You might think twice before accepting an invitation from that hunk and his murderously jealous wife, or from your ex-lover and her new partner... If there is any "goal" in a threesome, it should be for all the participants to have a fun and satisfying sexual experience, not dredge up fears of inadequacy, insecurity, jealousy... As with any sex, do it with people you like or love, people you care about and who care about you, and it will be hard to go wrong. Besides, you'll get to laugh at anyone who would call this much fun "fence sitting!"

My Homecoming Queen

by debra diana blue (c)1994

Everytime of think of you silk chocolate ribbons come to mind...

I hate when Dawn goes away, she leaves me feeling so hollow and lonely. She's an ad executive for a large firm and goes on business travel frequently. Tuesday morning she made love to me so exquisitely that I passed out. I vaguely remember her tall brown frame standing over me in a red teddy, muttering something about lambs.

Dawn usually comes home crazed from these trips, ranting about pig-headed, male executives not knowing anything about...anything. I enjoy it, actually, it's quite ritualistic. Keys hit the foyer table, clothes flying in every direction (she's so gorgeous flinging that long dark hair around). I massage her feet to the soft strains of Luther Vandross, while she vents. She knows that I have her herb bath and martini ready. So I sit and listen while she sips, soaks and simmers (trying to guess what herbs I have used for this particular bath, as I have several for her).

Since she has come in, I have not spoken a word—all of a sudden she looks at me in surprise and says “Aw sugar, how you been, didja miss me?” to which, I simply nod, because before I know it she’s “venting” again.

At this point, I know she's ready for me to lead her into our bedroom, bathed in a lavender glow with lavender scented candles and fresh talc-sprinkled sheets. I start by devouring her gorgeous full lips, her mouth is as sweet as honey. Her moans of pleasure fill my mouth, as well as my soul. That signals me to move on to her large lovely nipples - as inviting as Godiva's bon-bons. I am in heaven and I'm taking her with me.

As I kiss my way down her stomach her fragrance has started calling my name. She is so sweet and ready that we both ache. I can't wait much longer because I know that as soon as I tongue kiss her sweet wetness we will explode, like thousands of tidal waves pounding against a helpless shore. Then I watch her sleep for a while, knowing that she will awaken and stumble to the refrigerator looking for her cold chicken and her glass of white wine with the strawberry in it. ▼

.....—○—.....

“Coming Soon” Just Ended

"Coming Soon," a lesbian farce by British author Debbie Klein, has as one of its six parodied female characters a well-off, married woman who plays around with women. The play just finished its June 23 - July 16 run at Charlestown's (Mass.) Working Theater. ▼

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Bi-Women P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140

STONEWALL 25 RALLY AND MARCH REPORT

On Sunday June 26, 1994 the global lesbian, gay, bisexual, drag and transgender community marched on the United Nations for Human Rights. The March, led by a massive motorcycle contingent, the Stadtlanders Mile-Long Rainbow Flag, and the Stonewall Veterans, continued for over six hours with contingents from 72 nations and all 50 U.S. states. "We have gone from a street riot involving hundreds into a global movement of millions in just twenty-five years. It is quite powerful," stated co-chair Franklin Fry.

The march proceeded to the Rally on the Great Lawn in Central Park, at which performers, speakers and entertainers provided glimpses into our collective experiences from the world over. Speakers represented the full gamut of our struggle—from women with AIDS to parents to leather activists to politicians—and came from a wide range of countries including South Africa, Peru, Thailand, New Zealand, Germany, Britain and the United States.

At three o'clock the entire Rally and March came to a halt as all assembled stopped, stood and remembered in silence those who have been lost to AIDS and violence.

Stonewall 25 events also included the direct action "Out Around the World." On Monday June 27 over 200 activists focused on the Human Rights conditions at the UN Missions of South Africa, Japan, England, Brazil, Russia and the United States. At the US mission emphasis was put on the ban on travel by those with HIV. Additional lobbying occurred as individuals from over 40 countries met their United Nations representatives. Over 30 national and international conferences were also organized to coincide with the march.

Although the event itself was a big success, organizers need an additional \$300,000 to pay off the bills from the historic event. "After the week of Gay Games and numerous other events which did not financially benefit Stonewall 25, we found that many were tapped out by the time they got to Sunday June 26. We clearly were asking for people to give when they had already spent much of their money on event tickets, t-shirts, and dances," pointed out co-chair Nicole Ramirez Murray.

Many of the Executive Committee, which consists entirely of volunteers who have been working on Stonewall 25 for over a year, are themselves in debt with loans they have made or expenses they have incurred. "I myself am owed upwards of \$10,000 by the organization," added co-chair Fry.

A major step to fundraise is the production

of the official video tape, *The Future is Ours!* The tape will feature highlights from the march and the rally, including performances and speeches from around the world. The video and additional Stonewall 25 merchandise is available by calling 212-626-6925.

"To gather the number of people who were there was not an overnight production. Nine years of planning went into the international aspects of this event," declared co-chair Pat Norman. "We need those who felt moved by the events to make a contribution."

Contributions may be mailed to Stonewall 25, P.O. Box 2038, New York, New York, 10113 or by calling 212-626-6925.

- from a Stonewall 25 press release on the Internet

Editor's note: Responding to this appeal and explicitly noting with your check that this is "bisexual money" will help send home the message of the power of our community, as our visibility at the events showed the power of our anger, of our voices, of our unity, and our numbers. ▽

Make the World a Better Place

The American Association of University Women has produced an educational film called "Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America." The film can be borrowed for screening by groups such as PTA's, unions, girl scout troops, etc., by calling the AAUW at (617) 536-9500. This tip was included in the book *How to Make the World a Better Place in Five Minutes a Day* by Donna Jackson, Hyperion, 1992. (We probably all have at least one girl in our lives who might benefit by the showing of this film, don't ya think?) ▽

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Dee Greenberg ♦ (617)562-0294

Thought you'd like to know . . .

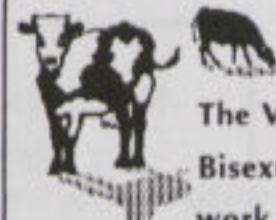
Wayne Roberts was scheduled to be the (token) bi speaker at the rally following the Stonewall march. He was scheduled to speak at 2PM. Wayne waited all afternoon and at 7:30 he was told to leave because there would be no more speakers. Word was that he was devastated at having come 10,000 miles only to have his day wasted in the cause of petty politics (actually more than one day, since he also spent considerable time writing the speech that he never got to deliver).

Those wishing to send him letters of support, sympathy, and encouragement can reach him care of:

Australian Bisexual Network
P.O. Box 470
Lutwyche,
QLD 4030
Australia

Copies to the Stonewall 25 committee may also be appropriate.

- Wayne Bryant



The Vermont Bisexual Network has a new mailing address: P.O. Box 8124, Burlington, VT 05402-8124. Phone calls can still be made to Jill Merkel at (802) 496-2071. Call about their bi-monthly meetings!

Our Favorite Slut

Our Heroine, Lani

Ka'ahumanu, co-editor of the anthology *Bi Any*

Other Name, is featured in the August/September issue of *Ms. Magazine*.

Her San Francisco-based HIV education group, the Safer Sex Sluts, is featured as one of this issue's "50 Ways To Be a Feminist." The group does outreach to lesbians and bisexual women.

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For only **\$10 per issue**, your message will reach over 700 subscribers. Save \$5 and advertise in three issues for \$25.

Send your business-card sized ad **or personal ad** (50 words or less) and a check (to BBWN) to:

BiWomen, c/o BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140

Such a deal!

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sex ♥ sex

WISHFUL THINKING

One of my current pipe dreams involves a "sugar-mommy". Let's call her Sabrina. She's very attractive and has a lot of money she's desperately trying to discover something to do with.

[Obviously.]

Sabrina likes sex. She likes variety. She likes love. She likes me.

[Well, I know I'm moody, poor, childlike; an inexperienced, promiscuous dandy...but it could happen. Okay, okay, I admit it, I'm an idealistic twit too.]

Anyway, as I was saying, Sabrina likes sex. Not that dildo-thrusting, pelvic-throbbing mosh dance. I mean SEX!!! Slow-moving, thigh-tasting, ear nibbling, breast-heaving, tongue-weaving, leg-shaking, body-quaking SEX. Sex...slippery, wet, sweaty, hot, juicy, and delicious.

[Oops...sorry,...guess I got carried away.]

Sabrina's an artist. Oh, I dunno...writer, poet, painter, dancer, costumer... an artist. She likes water, sun, trees, critters, movies, operas, and dancing. She likes clothes. Not that Gap-wear. She likes hats, scarves, silver, dark greens and azure colored cloaks. She likes plumes and bloomers, sash-belts and harem-pants.

And she loves spending money. One of her favorite pastimes is whisking me off to a plaza and buying me everything I happen to brush my arm across or lay my hand on. We're talking Paris here, Rome, the Netherlands and Greece.

[Hey—as long as I'm dreaming, it might as well be grandiose.]

She likes to experiment: fly a plane, parachute, ride a wave, hula-hoop.... She likes men; she likes groups; she likes toys; she likes places.

As I was saying, she likes me.

- Heidi Vanderheiden
tigris@calumet.org

so I sit with you,

riding that throbbing white motorcycle
and the way you lean back, into me
touching my knee, my leg

sends cold lightning through my body

and I wonder, what it would be like
to make love to you
and I can feel the white power
of that harley you ride
and I wonder, if riding you
would be the same

so I sit with you,

riding that great white machine
holding onto you, laughing into the wind
still wondering...

Gayathri Kamath 5/11/93



Been looking in mirrors, lately, pausing
by storefront glass, pushing back
hair and watching the walk, body, eyes.

Been dancing with women, lately, touching
shoulders, arms. Shy fingertips as
voice, in beats I work to ease though.

Been drinking, talking, lately, too much,
too sure, too studied, myself
marketed, for the length of a beer.

Been getting stoned, lately, purposely losing
time in strokes, yet escaping his
kisses. They'd ask why I'm there.

Been looking in mirrors, vainly, pushing
back hair, and watching.

- Lynne Jacoby

1990 Census Data on Same-Sex Couples

excerpted by Robyn Ochs from the Washington Blade, 6/25/94

In 1990, for the first time, both the short and long form versions of the US Census allowed people to identify themselves as "roommates" or "unmarried partners." Following is some information about "unmarried partners" for our Bi Women readers:

Of all of the unmarried couples - both same and opposite sex—who identified through the 1990 Census, 9.2 were same-sex.

Behind San Francisco (35.4 percent), Washington is the second "gayest"—at 18.9 percent—of the twenty largest cities in the country; Boston is the third—when counting both male and female couples—at 16.2 percent. But counting just female couples, Boston ranks right behind San Francisco, with the second greatest proportion of lesbian couples compared to the total of unmarried partner households.

Seventy percent of the same sex-couples who identified themselves on the census were male couples; 30 percent were female. Roughly 11 percent of same sex couples who identified themselves through the census were Black; 3 percent were Asian or American Indian, and 85 percent were white.

Of interest is the fact that only 27.5 percent of the same-sex couples reside in the 20 most populated cities. Also of interest to Bi Women readers: In Northampton, Mass., of the 631 unmarried partner households counted, 18.1 percent were same sex. Of these, 91.2 percent consisted of 2 females. Provincetown, Mass., recorded 24.7 percent of the 170 unmarried partner households as same-sex.

Aside from Robyn: Actual percentages are probably significantly higher, as these figures represent only those people who were willing to "come out" to the US Government. ▼

Wear your Bi Pride on your chest.

For just \$15 (or \$14 if you come to the

Bi Office) you get a Bisexual Pride t-shirt in black or deep purple sizes small to xx-large. Please indicate size and color with order. Make check out to

BBWN and send to:

**BBWN, attn. Stephanie/T-shirts,
95 Berkeley St., Suite 613, Boston,
MA 02116.**
Order NOW!

sex ♥ SEX

Isolated Memories

© Jen Collins 1994

She strays, detached, along the side of the unwearying rushing brook and she wonders fitfully if she will ever see her friend again, as she reaches up and runs her small white hands through her short red hair and her nail catches suddenly against a tangled strand, bringing her up out of her mind's antechamber and she looks about her, momentarily confused, and then, laughing at her surprise and nothing, decides to remove her sandals and dip her sleek white feet into the cool gray water, and silvery tadpoles and fluttering minnows wriggle around and between her toes and she stirs the pebbles underneath her with each movement as she lapses uneasily back into her thoughts, denying memories, trying not to remember touches and sighs and dampness and sobs, and her breath begins to quicken and the more she tries to refuse these intrusive images the warmer she feels and the more her knees fail her and the murmuring wind tosses her skirt around her legs teasingly before finally throwing the flimsy material up over her head, exposing her lithe white body to the pagan Spring green, and she gasps, caught somehow, and yet, because she can hide no longer, and without another glance she pulls off her blouse and pulls down her skirt, freeing herself and she lies down, allowing the current to flow over her, feeling it ease over her body and brush through her hair, whose damp tangles she can feel caressing her face and she licks her lips to taste the sweetness of her sweat which the water has carried from her forehead to her mouth, and she tries to clear her mind once again, using the water to wash away the thoughts she cannot have but she so wants to give in and let her mind crawl back to the room they shared and the night they cared enough about each other to shut out the rest of the world but now she uses time and isolation to shut out that room because she knows it isn't true and she knows she didn't do that with her and she knows what those people go through and she knows how it felt to have her hands run up under her hair and over her thighs and she knows how easily she cried out her name when she touched her and she knows how smooth her skin was and she can't allow herself to remember except for the fact that she just can't get her out of her mind so she runs her hands hard through the water, over the smoothness of the stones, and she begins to splash the water between her hands and legs, slapping the water against her thighs and she tosses the water over her stomach and her breasts and her neck and her face. She hopes that if someone passes by and sees her there splashing the water over herself, naked but for the white foam of the brook, they won't be able to tell that the tears she cries are for her because of the words she whispered in her ear that were sweeter than any others and the way she held her when she cried and when she told her that she loved her and she knew it was true. ▼

Havurat Shalom, founded in 1968, is a feminist, egalitarian Jewish community. Weekly services with egalitarian liturgy and great singing. Fridays 7:00pm, Saturdays 10:00am. Call re: vegetarian pot lucks, children's service, other events. Jewish exploration & discussion from a feminist perspective. Open to all—women, men, lesbian, gay, bi, straight. 113 College Ave., Somerville, MA (617) 623-3376

Women's Bi Rap Meets P-Town...

by Lynne Jacoby

... And girl did we fail miserably (we were just too shy) on the hook up/flirting scene. Lord!, just too many beautiful woman and too little nerve to approach them with!!!

Question #1 - Is it: A) that the woman are just too fine - or B) that all the men are with men on that strip on the tip of the Cape that makes one forget the guy in the bi?

However true love was established, if only with the town itself.

The beaches were packed, with women here, men over there, and families way way down there. A perfect set up for efficient scoping, no?

The dance floors were a little less ideal, especially the Pied Piper, as being too packed to distinguish one body from another. Although if you were already with someone it was just perfect, as there was no other way to dance but close!

Question #2 - If you and a friend see, strolling down the beach, two woman the two of you have been scoping at Esme's the last two weekends, do you: A) stroll after them at least trying to think of a way to begin a conversation or B) lolligag around on your towel, hoping, somehow, with a whole wide beach to choose from, they'll settle near you.

The outer beach youth hostel was ideal accommodations, especially since gutless us had a bi's chance in a separatist commune of bringing home a date, so the seven bunks in one cabin didn't cramp anyone's style. It was cheap, we had use of kitchen facilities, and it was a five minute walk to town.

Question #3 - If two of your friends end up lying in the middle of the road laughing helplessly when a cop car comes up (it could happen to anyone, ya know) do you: A) try and help them explain the situation as soberly as possible, or B) stand slightly and silently away as if you barely know them, and are somewhat appalled by their antics as well.

Of course, the best part of Provincetown is what you'd expect even if you've never been there before, the confirmation. It has a different twist than the marches, or other special Gay events, if only because it's so normally tacky. It's the kind of place to be avoided in the straight world, a tourist trap summer hot spot, but it's not straight. And all the overpriced t-shirts have gay mottoes, and all the too quaint shops have gay paraphernalia, and all the fernized bars and cafes are gay oriented, and all the cliques of too beautiful people are gay.

It's an awesome twist, and although I for one wouldn't want to spend every summer weekend in P-town, it is irresistible, and we must go again. And if you answered A) on questions one through three, we definitely need you to go with us....

The Bi Women's Rap Group is an informal discussion group that meets at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge each Tuesday night from 7:30 to 9:30. All women are welcome. For info, topics call (617) 354-8807.

Thinking of Moving?

Are you:

- Looking for a place in the Boston area starting in August or September?
- Bi or Bi-friendly? (And who else would be reading this newsletter?)
- Interested in living in a cozy, smoke-free, VERY CHEAP (\$226/mo. + utilities), T accessible, apartment in Dorchester with a fun, communicative, flexible 28 y.o. Bi woman?

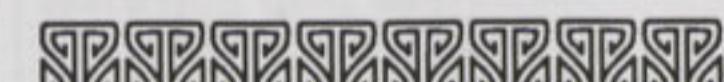
If so let's talk. My wonderful roommate is moving to the "City Bi the Bay" in Sept., so if this living situation sounds interesting call me (Linda) at (617) 282-3537. I hope to hear from you soon!!!

Fenway Community Health Center's Research Department

is conducting a telephone survey for women who have sex with bisexual men. All calls are anonymous.



Please call
1-800-331-BOTH
and be a part of this
important study.



No Sequel to Tales

PBS has announced it will not fund the sequel to *Tales of the City*, despite the fact that it was the highest-rated dramatic production PBS has ever aired. It was targeted by the American Family Association, who opposed its portrayal of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals as happy, well adjusted and fulfilled. To let PBS know what you think, write: Ervin Duggan, President, PBS, 1320 Bradock Road, Alexandria, VA 22314-1698.

Calls for submissions

This is a call for articles for a book to be published in the UK in 1995 on "Non-Monogamy and Relationship Diversity". It will include both analytical and personal articles, and is intended for a wider audience than the purely academic. The editors are two women and one man, with either practical experience or a research interest in the area. We all felt that there was a severe lack of useful published material for people trying to live in responsible non-monogamous relationships, and intend that this book will provide support for such people and promote this lifestyle as a valid alternative. We have a number of articles already but there are gaps in the following areas:

- The historical context: influence of religions, "primitive" cultures, the changing conventions of Western society, oppression, etc.;
- non-monogamy in feminist theory;
- the state of the "poly" movement internationally.

The aim of this book is to explore theoretical contexts for alternatives to conventional Western monogamy, and practical experiences and proposals for non-monogamous relationships.

Articles of up to 3000 words are solicited, although longer articles may be accepted if they offer particular insights.

We need final drafts by end October 1994, and initial drafts as soon as possible. Mail address: K. Lano, Hazelmount, Church Rd., Binstead, Isle of Wight, PO33 3TB, UK. E-mail address: kcl@doc.ic.ac.uk

- from the Internet

E-MAIL SURVEY SUBJECTS NEEDED - ASAP

Note: in the following article, "women" should be interpreted to mean people of any gender history who do currently publicly identify as women.

Hi, I am seeking women, age 18 and up, to participate in a pilot experiment for a survey I will be running this summer. However, I need people to answer as soon as possible, because I will be using these responses to formulate my longer survey, which I need to finish really soon. The topic I am studying is women's social identity. Please forward this message anywhere that you think is appropriate. If you are interested in participating in the longer survey when it is ready, please send me e-mail telling me that.

This short survey should take no more than 5 minutes, if you are willing to participate, please do it now. Thanks!

INSTRUCTIONS:

type your date of birth at the top. Then start typing words that you would use to describe yourself (e.g., woman, tall, etc.). Please keep typing words for approximately 5 minutes, and try to list at least 20 words. Then email it to rebecca@psyche.mit.edu

that's it! thanks very much!

If you have questions, you can reach me by email at rebecca@psyche.mit.edu or by phone at (617) 282-2887.

- rebecca

Kisses

Editor seeks personal essays on significant kisses—the best, worst, most enchanting, horrifying, wanted, unwanted, first, last, gay, the kiss of a cousin, lover, rapist, prostitute, etc. We want the reader to share the experience. Guidelines for SASE. Little River Publishing, 19 Parkwood Road, Hanover, CT 06350.



Correspondence Club for Bi's Only

Make a penfriend...share subjects of mutual interest...meet vacation partners...exchange visits...meet the man or woman (or man and woman) of your dreams...promote solidarity with the bisexual community in other cities, states, countries...

To participate:

describe yourself, your personality, interests, hobbies, likes and dislikes on a piece of paper. For best matching results you may include a recent snapshot (all info and photos will be kept confidential). We will try to match you with three compatible bisexual people to contact by mail.

Write to:

O.C., P.O. Box 11248, Hilo, Hawaii 96721. Please enclose S.A.S.E. or a 29¢ stamp. There is no fee to join. Aloha!

All Bi, Myself

by Kathrine Douthit



Edinburgh Bisexual Resource Centre

There will soon be a Bisexual Resource Centre in Edinburgh, Scotland.

BiFrost, the bisexual newsletter for the United Kingdom, will be renting space at the Lesbigay centre where the bisexual phone line is already based, and using it as both an office and a resource center.

A portion of the rent and a computer have been donated to the center. The center will be used for a bisexual lending library, a bi archives which would be available for study, distribution of free condoms, a speakers bureau, and the bisexual phone line.

- Reported in BiFocus, a newsletter for Philadelphia's bisexual community.

Queer Studies *continued from page 1*

and insights. A good indication of the field's attitude toward bisexuality was the general lack of inclusiveness at the five national Queer Studies conferences held at East Coast universities from 1987-1991. Most of these conferences were billed as "Lesbian and Gay Studies" events and, true to the name, the papers and performances largely disregarded bisexuals and bisexuality. Even the little progress that was made to have the word "bisexual" added to the conference title was set back when the organizers at Princeton and Rutgers Universities decided to remove it in 1991.

This tradition of bi-exclusion will end this year. "InQueery, InTheory, InDeed," the 6th North American Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Studies Conference, is being held at the University of Iowa from November 17-20. Not only is the word "bisexual" back in the title, but it will actually mean something. The Iowa conference will break new ground by having a bi keynote speaker, Lani Ka'ahumanu, and more bisexual papers than any prior Queer Studies conference—in part because a special effort was made to solicit and to include bisexual work. And unlike other conferences, bisexual papers will not be "ghettoized" on a few bi panels; instead, bisexual material will be included throughout the schedule, along with bi-specific panels and programming. Among the events being planned especially for bisexuals are an open reception and a Midwest regional meeting of BiNet. Finally, another first is my role as one of the co-chairs. To my knowledge, none of the five previous conferences had a bisexual coordinator.

We hope that a large number of bisexual academics, activists, and artists will attend the conference. In addition to hundreds of papers and workshops, programming will include social and cultural events, book readings, art exhibits, and performances by groups such as Pomo Afro Homos and Stomp. To obtain a registration form or for more information, contact "InQueery, InTheory, InDeed," c/o WRAC, 130 N. Madison St., Iowa City, Iowa 52242 or call 319-335-3555. ▼

Seattle bi F, mid 30s, androgynous, philosophical/mystical/metaphysical, seeks outlaw partner for ongoing correspondence. Journeys, opinions, dreams, erotica, whatever, let's exchange long, rambling letters and captivate one another with our private visions. I want to make literature with you.

Lisa Coyote

P.O. Box 30645, Greenwood Station
Seattle, WA 98103-0645.

Texas Newspaper Begins New Policy of Inclusion and Equality

Same-Sex Weddings to be Run Alongside Opposite-Sex Announcements

EL PASO, TX (June 26, 1994) - What some have called "a huge victory for queer equality and inclusion in mainstream media," the El Paso Times, a member of the Gannett Group, has begun including same-sex couples alongside heterosexuals in their wedding announcements. The Times is believed to be one of only a handful of daily papers in the nation to do so.

Supportive calls and letters to the newspaper are URGENTLY needed to help offset negative reactions to their new non-discrimination policy.

Contact Dionicio "Don" Flores, Publisher & Editor, toll-free (800) 351-1677 or (915) 546-6149.

The El Paso Times accepts letters to the editor dictated over the telephone, by mail or facsimile. Outside El Paso County, callers may call toll-free (800) 351-6007, ext. 6420. By mail: Letters to the editor, El Paso Times, P.O. Box 20, El Paso, Texas 79999. FAX: (915) 546-6415.



Our Right to Health Care

The Human Rights Campaign Fund reports that legislation prohibiting discrimination in health care based on sexual orientation or health status, has cleared a third hurdle in the Health Reform Bill's legislative process. The non-discrimination clauses, however, still face an uphill battle to clear the conservative Senate Finance Committee before reaching a final vote in both houses of Congress. To receive a copy of the HRCF's recent report *What Every Lesbian and Gay American Needs to Know About Health Care Reform* or for more info call the HRCF office at (202) 628-4160. (And maybe let them know that you saw this in a Bi publication and that we need/want this info, too.) ▼

Congratulations, Laura!

Our own Laura Sachs has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Pride Committee, Inc., the organization that sponsors Boston Pride. Last year she served as a traffic control volunteer, and this past Pride Season she was very involved behind the scenes. As an out and proud bisexual member of the Board, she will be looking for our support and input. By the way, next year will be the 25th anniversary of Boston Pride. ▼

CALENDAR, from page 12

September 10 • Saturday

BBWN Potluck Brunch at Kathrine's. Noon. It's THE place to see and be seen. Have you met Kathrine yet? She's the very cool artist who does the "All Bi, Myself" cartoon series! Come to the brunch, and maybe you'll meet Dexter, too! In the Coolidge Corner area of Brookline (Green Line). Call Kathrine for directions: (617) 738-5383.

Provincetown Harbor Swim for Life and Mermaid Brunch

AIDS Benefit. 9:30am at the Boatslip in P-town. Swimmer Registration, pledge sheets and info: write P.O. Box 819, Provincetown, MA 02657, or call (508) 487-3684.



Biversity Potluck Dinner in Malden, 6pm. Yummm! Call Gayathri at (617) 324-9606 for directions.

September 12 • Monday

BiWomen volunteer night. Type articles for the BiWomen newsletter, read the mail, make phone calls, or just chat and eat the FREE MUNCHIES!! Please come! The more the sillier! 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Info: (617) 338-9595.

September 14 • Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

September 17 • Saturday

Saturday Dim Sum Bi Brunch. Meet at 10:45am at the Chinatown Arch on Beach Street in Boston.

September 21 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See June 1.

September 24 • Saturday

Biversity Night Out. Dancing at Quest, 1270 Boylston St. (near the McDonalds). Cover \$5. Meet downstairs at 9:30pm.

September 25 • Sunday

Sunday Bi Brunch. At Asmara in Central Square, Cambridge. Ethiopian food! Meet at 1:30pm.

September 26 • Monday

BBWN newsletter stuffing volunteer night. Free anecdotes, gossip, unsolicited advice, jokes, fun! Help us get the newsletter out to those who need it. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Info: (617) 338-9595.

Bi Space. See August 7.

October 5 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See August 3.

Looking Ahead ...

October 10-16 • Monday-Sunday

Women's Week in Provincetown. Sponsored by Women Inkeepers of Provincetown. "An exciting week of women's activities." Contact your favorite inn, or write: Women Innkeepers of Provincetown, P.O. Box 573, Provincetown, MA 02657.



November 17-20 • Thursday-Sunday

InQueery/InTheory/InDeed: Sixth North American Lesbian, Gay, and BISEXUAL Studies Conference; University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

Keynote speaker: Lani Ka'ahumanu! Also, performance artists Pomo Afro Homos, rhythm performance group Stomp, all-conference dance, Queer Film Fest, InQueery Coffeehouse, Les/Bi/Gay Art, Photography and Book Exhibits. Sliding scale up to about \$100. Some community housing available. Registration: (800) 551-9029. Info: (319) 335-3555. ▽

New Bi Group Forms in Oklahoma

The Oklahoma Bisexual Network (OBiN) formed in June, with two chapters: one in Norman and one in Stillwater. OBiN/Norman meets on the first Sunday of each month at 7pm at the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation Student Center, corner of Boyd and Elm in Norman. For OBiN/Stillwater meeting times and locations, call chapter chair Hildreth Overcash at (405) 744-5252.

The following letter was received at the Bisexual Resource Office this past April.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am part of a fledgling bisexual support/discussion group here in Norman Oklahoma and we've had two meetings so far. We are also in close contact with a group of people in Stillwater, Oklahoma who are doing the same and have had one meeting. We are the first two chapters of the Oklahoma Bisexual Network (OBiN)...

Right now we're all very excited, but at the same time we're also insecure about what to do to keep things exciting and keep plenty of people involved. So I would really appreciate your pamphlet "How to Start a Bisexual Support Group" and I've enclosed one dollar and a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Thanks in advance!

Sincerely,

Gregory Potts



Ongoing Events

▼
(continued from page 12)

Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

1st and 3rd Wednesdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual. A free informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 338-9595.

3rd Thursdays

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm at the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor.

Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. Free, open to public. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

The Bi Office

is the Bisexual Resource Office, 95 Berkeley Street, Suite 613, Boston. (617) 338-9595

Ongoing Events

First Mondays:
Support Group for Anti-Racist White Women, 6:30-8:30pm at the Women's Theological Center, 140 Clarendon St., 6th fl., Boston. No charge, donation requested. Info: (617) 536-8782.

Tuesdays:
Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30-9:30pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge. All women welcome. Info, topics: (617) 354-8807.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Freedom Trail Band Rehearsals. Concert and marching band, no auditions. 7:30-9:30pm. Location and info: Kathy (617) 236-5978.

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:
Bisexual Issues Rap Group at the New Haven Women's Center, 614 Orange St., (corner Bishop) New Haven, Conn. Call to specify wheelchair access or ASL interpreting needs. Voice (203) 776-2658, TTY and voice (203) 397-2381.



continues on p. 11

CALENDAR

July 31 • Sunday

Vermont Bisexual Network Potluck/Arts & Entertainment Get-Together Extravaganza at Jill Merkel's house. Call Jill at (214) 929-4500 for directions.

August 3 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. A free informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 338-9595.

August 6 • Saturday

BBWN Potluck Brunch at Sharon's. Noon. Meet old and new friends at the hippest women's brunch in town! In the Central Square area of Cambridge (Red Line). Call Sharon for directions: (617) 497-7646.

Support the Boston Bisexual Women's Network – and help us keep the newsletter coming!

Subscribe to BiWomen!

To start a new subscription or renew your current one, fill out the form below.

Name _____

Address _____

New Renewal

Sliding scale (check one):

\$0-20 (pay what you can) _____

\$20-30 (suggested) _____

\$30-100 _____

Send this form along with your check to:

BBWN

P.O. Box 639

Cambridge, MA 02140

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space.

August 9-14 • Tuesday-Sunday

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. Info: send SASE to W.W.T.M.C., Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458, or call (616) 757-4766.

August 12-14 • Friday-Sunday

Bi Camp 1994. Red Mill Brook National Forest, Southern Vermont. Go camping in the beautiful wilderness on the Appalachian Trail, in the company of a few dozen other bisexual and bi-friendly people for a fun summer weekend. Bring your own camping equipment and food (sharing is encouraged). Clothing-optional swimming is just a short drive away. Sliding scale \$15-35. Info: Bi Office (617) 338-9595, or check out the insert from the last issue of BiWomen.

August 17 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See August 3.

August 20 • Saturday

Saturday Bi Brunch. 11am at Grecian Yearning, 174 Harvard Ave., in Brighton. Take the B branch of the Green Line to the corner of Commonwealth and Harvard near Pizzaria Uno.

August 27 • Saturday

Biversity Beach Day! At Singing Beach on the North Shore. Meet at North Station at 9:45am. We will take the Rockport/Ipswich train to Singing Beach. Costs \$3.50 each way.



August 28 • Sunday

Sunday Bi Picnic Brunch. Picnic on the Esplanade! Meet at 1:30pm at Arthur Fielder's head (a statue near the Fielder footbridge over Storrow Drive).

September 4 • Sunday

Bi Space. See August 7.

September 7 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See August 3.

September 9 • Friday

BiWomen submissions deadline for the October/November issue!! Plan ahead! The theme is "Bridging the Lesbian/Bi Gap," but submissions on all subjects are welcome.

CALENDAR continues on page 11

BRIDGING THE LESBIAN/BI GAP

Between Two Worlds

by Marilyn Ramazonoff

I am a lesbian who is seriously involved with a man. A contradiction in terms. A contradiction to my principles, beliefs about myself, and lifestyle. I never expected to be in this position. Before I came out as a lesbian, I studied lesbian and feminist theory and vowed I'd never be one of those wimmin I read about who experimented with sexuality and hurt lesbians as a result. It took me years to come out as a lesbian, in part because of this vow. Then, I fell deeply in love with a woman, was galvanized into gay activism, and became an activist radical lesbian and lesbian community leader. I helped form an organized cluster of radical lesbian activities in my small town. I led the community in being an out spokeswoman, a support group leader, and event organizer. I had a number of different relationships with wimmin.

Over the years, I became tired of all the work, and started distancing myself from activism and organizing. I lost touch with our lesbian community, but maintained some friends within it. I was in the process of trying to re-define my relationship to our community as a non-activist when I began spending time with an old boyfriend of mine. We rekindled a great friendship which became over the course of a year a "relationship."

I kept both the friendship and later the relationship a secret from many of my lesbian friends, fearing their judgment and condemnation, especially since I had been one of the vocal members of our community excluding bisexual wimmin and anything male/non-lesbian from our organized activities. Now I have to reconsider, eat my words, admit rigidity may be wrong, etc. A very squirmy, uncomfortable place to be.

When I started telling my lesbian friends about the man in my life I discovered more support from them than I was willing to give myself. They encourage me to pursue whatever makes me happy. I fear I'll never be able to go back to being fully accepted by them as a "true" lesbian (i.e., someone who can be counted on to be

loyal to the lesbian community forever), but in the meantime, my lesbian friends are teaching me to accept myself, rather than vice-versa. When I finally confessed my relationship to one of my closest lesbian friends, she told me she had racked her brains trying to figure out what was going on in my life that I wouldn't tell her—since obviously something was going on—and she had already deduced I must be dating a man. She was sad I hadn't felt I could talk to her about it sooner, but supportive of me and deeply curious about what I was going through emotionally and politically. I was more upset and nervous about it than she was. It's almost like a tilted, reversed coming out. It felt just like telling a straight friend I was a lesbian, except for one important thing. When I came out as a lesbian, I

Two Worlds *continues on page 10*



One Bi Woman's Journey

by Sharon Gonsalves

I first came out as a lesbian in 1980, then as bisexual in 1984. For the past few years I have avoided discussing the issues between lesbian and bisexual women because it was such a sore spot for me for so long. As a lesbian, I trashed bisexuals. As a bisexual, I got trashed by my lesbian community. So I moved to Boston where I could be part of a feminist bi women's community, avoid being trashed and maybe even feel good about myself and my choices.

This worked out fine until I got involved in a relationship with a lesbian who was very tolerant and accepting of bisexual women, but some of her friends were not. Since I was her lover, her friends assumed I was a lesbian. At times I was exposed to the usual trashing, but it was the late '80s and things were starting to change. Bi women were making great strides around visibility and many lesbians were finding out who

Journey *continues on page 7*

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BiWomen is published bi-monthly.

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The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Coming in BiWomen

The theme for the December/January issue:

Work Issues:

- Are you out at work?
- How does your sexuality affect your work and vice versa?
- Being bi and unemployed
- ... or whatever work issues you want to write about

Possible future themes:

How BBWN works Humor Diversity Non-Monogamy

DEADLINE for the December/January issue:

Friday, November 11, 1994

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten) or on floppy disk (PC or Mac), and include a name and phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published, please tell us! Otherwise we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. You may contribute anonymously, or just use your first name, if you wish.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140

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Thoughts on How Lesbians Get Along With Bisexuals in a World That (Still) Has No Place for Us

by [REDACTED]

Because horizontal hostility is such old news and a sign of regression, I wish this topic wasn't still around, but since it is, here goes.

Starting Points

Being more afraid of the lesbians at work than the straights because of the pressure of never knowing how to align myself with them in that environment. My deep rooted (and justified) terror of being hurt for my "sexual preference." The straight or the gay. We lose so much being hated for who we love. I hate this dumb topic because I think the lesbian community has become so boring anyway. But it's because we live in non-feminist times, backlash times, not because of lesbians themselves. I used to love the word lesbian. I still love individual lesbians—Val, Marcia, Laurel. Laurel and Grace both claimed to be bisexual once but would rather be lesbians. In some ways it's "easier" to be a lesbian, easier to be *clear* about who you love, who exactly you are enthusiastic about (women). Now that I'm with a man I'm always tempering my lesbianism—I don't want it to look like I'm "really" a closeted lesbian. I told my boyfriend I don't identify with any sexual orientation label and he said, "No,

[REDACTED] you identify with all of them, that's what's so beautiful." Ever notice how bisexual women tend to overcompensate by obsessively identifying with lesbianism? I know it's partly to counteract the lesbian invisibility that bisexuals, too, suffer. Beyond this though I think the issue of our relationships with men is just as important to heal. I've been resisting overidentifying with lesbianism. Now it's so hard to identify with, to *love*, any identity. To love loving men or women. I love my partner, but do I ignore his gender as part of my anti-identity? I think it's damned time that a non-bisexual felt politically incorrect around me.

Intersections

The coercion in "queer" groups to make bisexuals identify more with lesbians than with heterosexuals. The profound lack of labels and distinctions in the progressive, liberation oriented environment I first came out in eight years ago. Claudia, a lesbian who was a mentor to me, who stopped writing to me after my letter in which I told her I was bisexual. Trying to find common ground at the Cambridge Women's Center, the old Gay and Lesbian Center on Newbury Street, and even occasionally at Indigo and Gertrude's in Central Square. Going with Ana to the re-evaluation counseling workshop about healing separations between women of *all* sexual orientations and crying over all the years labels have been used against me. Inadvertently choosing three bisexual women friends with boyfriends to

go with to the Somerville/Watertown gay picnic. Finding out that the lesbians who cared most about healing and activism in bi-phobic L.A. were usually bisexuals. Carolyn, Maya, Helen, Mary Ann, Christina, and all the women in my life whose choices to live with integrity I respect so much and whose friendships make me live. The Hollywood support group in 1988 led by Sharon Sumpter, later of *Bi Any Other Name*, for bisexual lesbians, which made so much sense. Being lovers with a beautiful lesbian radical artist healer, everything I could have wanted in a woman. Friends wrongly assuming that my parents would be less rejecting of me as a bisexual than as a lesbian. The ridiculousness of labels among lesbian friends who accept me—it wastes energy we could use for something else.

Possibilities

I've been thinking lately about having the right to be thrilled to love women, not tempering it, and honored to love men, part of the life that I live and breathe. To feel all of my choices fully as blessings, all fully and simultaneously alive, at the expense of not one of them. Not afraid, having to choose, or blending in as a by-product of a choiceless and heterosexist world. That would bridge some gaps—in me. ▼

In the Mail . . .



We received a letter from New Dawn, a bi-friendly retreat & guest house in the Caribbean, welcoming any subscribers to BiWomen to the Caribbean. For more information about planning your next trip to the Caribbean, write to Gail Burchard, New Dawn Caribbean Retreat & Guest House, P.O. Box 1512, Vieques, Puerto Rico, 00765.

The Fort Collins Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Alliance serves the members of Colorado State University and the surrounding communities. They can be reached by writing to: FCGLBA/ Box 206 Activities Center/ CSU/ Fort Collins, CO 80523 or call them at (303) 491-7232.

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C'mon you can
say it....
Bi-sex -yoo-el

WASHINGTON (AP) — Almost one-fifth of Americans have been attracted to someone of the same sex at some time since age 15, according to a new study that has been criticized by some statisticians but touted by gay rights activists.

The study, conducted by researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health and the Center for Health Policy Studies in Washington, found that between 6.2 percent and 20.8 percent of American men and 3.3 percent and 17.8 percent of American women could be considered "incidentally homosexual." The higher numbers are based on reported homosexual behavior or attraction since age 15. The lower estimates are based on reported same-sex sexual behavior during the previous five years.

"Our perspective is that sexual orientation isn't just a yes-no, heterosexual-homosexual (question)," said David Wypij (pronounced "wippy"), a Harvard statistician and a co-author of the study. "I think in most individuals there is some sort of range. You may be more heterosexual, you may be more homosexual." ▶



Congratulations to BiAtlanta for their one-year anniversary! If you're interested in the group or their monthly newsletter, BiLines, you can contact them at P.O. Box 5240/ Atlanta, GA 31107-5240.

Let Me Have Done It For You:

1. Having a traditional male lover who only tolerates your queer activism, and meanwhile...
2. Working twice as hard as the gay men and lesbians in a mixed queer organization to prove you're just as good as a "whole" Kinsey-6.

Introduction

You know the Woody Allen joke about being bisexual: "... twice as many chances of getting turned down for a date on Saturday nights."? Some days I defiantly quote its optimistic inverse: "Being Bisexual means twice as many chances getting a date on Saturday nights!" But I'm afraid that my experience has shown me the following: Being an out bisexual means that the gals have a hard time with me 'cause I still love guys, and the guys have a hard time with me because of my etched-in-stone lesbian-socialist-feminist politics. The following story is a warning. It describes my path over the past two or three years. I don't intend to do it again. As one Zen teacher said, when asked how he was, "Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha." Meaning, there is no perfect, pain-free solution in any choice. If you're a bisexual, there are bummers and there are perks.

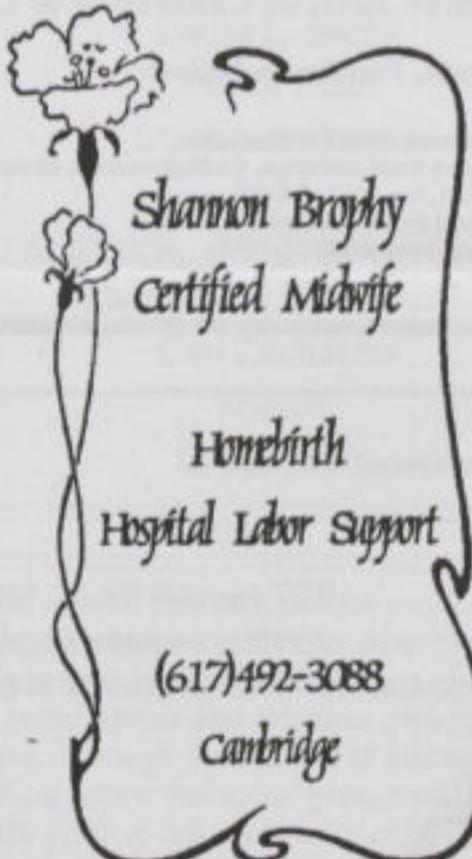
Coming out as a bisexual—isn't it just like coming out as a gay man or lesbian? Maybe to Jesse Helms it is. Coming out as anything non-traditional is perceived as an act of defiance, and often of rebellion, not because it's your intention, but because that's just how others perceive it. "How dare you . . . EXIST . . . at me!" At one of the first bi conferences in New Haven (1984?),

my pal Norman Davis remembers someone saying that if you tend to be an anti-establishment type, you will tend choose the bisexual label, and if you are more traditional, you will probably not do so. It makes sense to me. If I wanted to make fewer waves, I might easily say that I was straight or lesbian, even if I lived the life I am currently living. For me personally, both of these would make sense, since I like guys and more years than not, I've been a self-celebrating spinster with a lesbian herstory. Coming out to incur the wrath, if not misunderstanding, of two segments of support, the heterosexual world and the gay/lesbian world, is a double whammy. For those of us who consider ourselves radicals (and I do) it's especially hard to alienate members of an oppressed group—gay men and lesbians—people we love.

Why have I come out—to bosses, to parents, to lesbian friends, to potential boyfriends—as bi? Mainly, to conserve spiritual energy (less worrying and lying). Please remember that I speak for myself, and though I worked to get here and paid my dues, I am in a very privileged position. I live and work in Cambridge, at Harvard, where there is protective rights legislation for sexual orientation. I am literally surrounded by one of the largest, most supportive, most varied, and most creative and fun-loving group of bisexual activists on the planet, I am forty-four years old, have been in recovery for fourteen years, have had individual therapy, and have taken my time about it, coming out (in print) only in my late thirties. I do not live in a dangerously redneck town, I do not rely on my parents for rent and food money, I have a fairly benign oddball family who loves me, so I don't pretend that my head can boss around my heart and my gut without consequences.

Yes, consequences. Even without those outer barriers, there are always inner barriers. People like to be liked. There's always a price to pay if you're rejected, emotional if not material, and we can't pretend there isn't. Today I am comfortable, because I eventually realized that among any given room of queers, there were the bi-supportive ones and the others. And the supportive ones often tend to be more "let live" in attitude: more compassionate, more creative, and more spiritual. Some are very politically sophisticated (they have worked through past political analyses and

Let Me continues on next page



Let Me, from preceding page

actually see us as progressive in the 90's) and some aren't (they just don't see the big deal), but they all support bisexuality today. But that does not mean that there was and is no struggle.

As some of you might have read in my past writings to this wonderful rag, there was a hissy fit a couple of years back in the Cambridge Lavender Alliance over using the word "bisexual." (Note to our transgender brothers and sisters: the "T-word" was not yet discussed, although I'm sure it would be in this year's version of such a discussion.) First it was over the official name of the organization. When that was resolved (i.e., swept under the rug) by de-colonizing it (leaving the name as "The Cambridge Lavender Alliance"—NO COLON), it reared its ugly head again during a discussion of the wording of the first gay pride parade city proclamation in 1991. I had gone to my first meeting of this new Cambridge progressive queer rights group because the poster said that gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals were welcome, so I felt invited. When the proclamation was discussed, the B-word was included, thanks to a room packed with Cambridge bisexuals (thanks, troops!). But there was more to come. After our then-otherwise-wonderful mayor Alice Wolf read it, she objected to "bisexual" because she said it was an unfamiliar concept, and it would jeopardize the proclamation in the eyes of the more conservative Cambridge "Independents." "Gay" and "lesbian" on the other hand, were well known concepts and would probably ease through. (I could just picture them, sniffing out AIDS and promiscuity, not that any of them ever had sex for pleasure I'm sure.) This fed more fuel to the embers of resentment of the outvoted people—lesbians who felt that it was watering down the lesbian element in a mostly male gay/lesbian movement, and gay men who felt that the word itself "invoked the oppressor." They called another meeting to re-vote.

I was the only bisexual present at that meeting, and although I sat tall and breathed deeply, I trembled in my high tops. During the discussion, I said that I was bisexual, and that the Right sees us as queer as anybody, so strategically, let alone ethically, I thought bisexuals were part of the queer/gay liberation/lesbigay movement to stay. Also, that they see us as AIDS spreaders, and that is not true because "it's what you do, not who you do." Also, that if Cambridge and this group were so "progressive," that implied that it was a rainbow for all colors and all classes and all genders and all sexual orientations. Finally, I said, sometimes straight women are more afraid of bisexuals because they're "closer to home" personally. After all, Alice got lots of pleasure from being christened an "honorary lesbian." (What did that make me?) But this time, bisexual inclusion was soundly defeated, and the B-word was stricken from the proclamation.

After the vote, lots of people of both sexes came up to me and said, "Nothing personal, Marcia, we like YOU." It was true, my faggot and GUPPIE pals invited me to their parties and even pointed out the straight and bi guys and gave me money to speak at their college connections, and many of the dykes loved me singing "I'm Settled" at our National Coming Out Day Family Values Soapbox Speakout event on the Charles River or employed my (by then) ex-boyfriend to renovate their homes.

Right, nothing personal. I got locked in the school that night and had a horrible time finding my way out, I sobbed all the way home on my bike, and I had terrifying nightmares about lesbian pit-bulls. Ah, but sometimes there are cosmic compensations. Because the original proclamation had already been printed up, the word "bisexual" was read out to the crowd on that pride day. But in a room full of jello-thick tension.

Let me be clear here that I believe strongly in women's space without men and lesbian's space without straight and/or bi women at certain times and in certain places, if they are advertised as such, regardless of the Patriarchal legal system (never cared much for it, never have, never will). The principle is that if anyone takes away your power, even without trying to, their mere presence can undermine that all-important homegirl bonding that must precede "pride" and which comes only from other "you's" sharing stories which elevate your life from a personal problem to a political entity of rage and hope (consciousness-raising, or "C-R" as we called it in the early '70s). But this group was billed as a community queer group, and a progressive group. Since I loved Cambridge and I found the other "progressive" groups either too middle class or too male-leftist and serious, this was the one I wanted to get involved with. I loved being in a mixed group, because I like boys and girls, politically and libidinally, and I often ended up running interference between the two genders (who better than a bisexual?). I also loved being with my old lesbian feminist buddies from the early '70s ("Remember when we liberated the Memorial Drive building for our women's center in 1970? . . . Or was it '71?"). So I stuck it out.

I had gotten burned; it was definitely a political Grimm's fairy tale. But here comes a rare Walt Disney ending. The next year, by some magic—no, more like hard work, by groups like the G/L/B Irish parade group, flashing the B-word all over the *Globe* for a good queer cause (thanks to Cliff Arneson, Cathleen Finn and others), the vote came up again, and as everyone groaned about what language to use, one or two people said, "Oh, let's just include bisexuals." The B-word passed. I had not lobbied or anything, but I had come in determined to bring up the

Let Me continues on next page

Top 10 Reasons to Bridge the Lesbian/Bi Gap

by Susan Santucci and H. M.

10. There's enough prejudice in the world as it is.

9. Why position yourself against someone who has the potential to become one your greatest allies?

8. You'll both get more dates that way.

7. Women have been taught by society to pit themselves against each other, thereby weakening their power and the advancement of women's and gay rights.

6. You don't have to tell your parents that you're bringing your lesbian lover home for the holidays. You can tell them you're bringing your bisexual lover home instead.

5. For a gay civil rights bill to become law, support from all walks of life will be needed.

4. Commitment ceremonies between women will increase.

3. Get to be in the company of Madonna and Sandra Bernhard.

2. Get to share the pain of two minority groups instead of one.

1. Get to affirm someone else's existence and be one of the enlightened ones.

New Magazine

The Lesbian Review of Books is a quarterly publication for lesbians who love books. For subscription info: P.O. Box 6369, Altadena, CA 91003-6369. Tel: (818) 398-4200.

Lesbigay Folklore

"Prejudice and Pride: Gay and Lesbian Traditions in America" is a special issue of the journal of the New York Folklore society. Folklore has played a central role in the survival of lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals in a world which is hostile to gay identity. Through shared customs, queer people recognize and communicate with one another. Articles include the "Future of Gay and Lesbian Folk Studies" by Joseph P. Goodwin and "Hothead Paisan: Folk Hero" by Dana Heller. Copies are \$12.95 plus \$3 postage and handling and can be obtained from the New York Folklore Society, P.O. Box 130, Newfield, NY 14867, or call (607) 273-9137.

Crime Bill Includes Gay-Bashing as Hate Crime

The \$30.2 billion crime bill passed by the U.S. Senate in August contains increased penalties for hate crimes committed against lesbians and gay men according to a Press Release from the Human Rights Campaign Fund. The crime bill marks the first time Congress had acted to punish hate crimes against lesbians and gay men. The legislation increases sentences by at least three offense levels for federal crimes motivated by the victim's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, gender, or sexual orientation.

[Does anyone know what it says about bisexuals? Please drop BiWomen a line and let us know...]

Let Me, from preceding page

vote and I hadn't even had to do that. Although I tried to keep my cool, inside I was yelling "YESSS!!!" I asked around—what had happened? "It's not such a big deal," or "It's happening all over the country," were some of the responses.

Year three, I proudly and happily attended our pride brunch, presided over by our new just-out Black gay mayor. We had just made up buttons with my favorite slogan, "Cambridge: It's Always Been a Little Queer." I could really get behind that, as an oddball, as a devoted Cambridge Woman (with my checkered sexual past, Birkenstocks, too many degrees, hippie hair, the whole nine yards) and as "a little queer." At that event, just as we were about to present a surprise thank-you mug to Alice Wolf, I heard these words from one of the steering committee dykes:

"There is somebody in this room who has touched almost every one of us. Even if you do not know her in person, you know her by her writing. She has worked endlessly for progressive causes in this city for more than 20 years and has devoted much of the last 3 years to the Cambridge Lavender Alliance. It was difficult, but she withstood the vocal opposition to the inclusion of bisexual rights into our agenda and with tenacity and a pragmatic approach to organizing, she has changed many minds. She is a social and cultural critic, a humorist, a musician, and last but not least, our retiring scribe of the newsletter. We did not want to see her cover her keyboards without telling her how much we love her. So we have a mug for her which reads: 'Marcia Deihl, You've always been a little queer.' Let's give a thank you to Marcia."

Oh my. Girlfriends, can I die and go to heaven now? I don't usually joke about dying these days—there's too much of the real thing—but it was the peak of my queer career. Still high off it, I signed away my summer and fall to be Issues Manager (researching and writing pages and pages of commie-pinko-dyke policy statements) for a progressive dyke candidate for Cambridge City Council. (She won, quite a pleasant surprise for any first-timer!) As another bi woman said to me, "What a cheap date. Give her a mug and she'll follow you anywhere." Yeah, sort of.

I hope I'm not just showing off my dream victory here. It wasn't all fun. And I stayed for myself, not to prove something or to be against "them." I want some discouraged organizational BiWoman out there who is reading this to know that there's hope. But the big lesson is, it takes a while to accomplish anything worthwhile. "Little by little," as they say.

During all of this, I had a otherwise dear, sexy, working-class traditional boyfriend, who was not happy with my face on the Cambridge Tab over the heading, "Proud to Be Gay." Regarding my queer activism, he was not supportive; he was

barely tolerant. I eventually left him, for other reasons (I seem to be a monogamoose in my old age and he wasn't), but I could no more stop doing queer politics than I could stop playing music or writing—it's what I'm here for. Still, it was an issue with us. I'm not made of stone and at times I still really miss him. Although my love life has rarely interfered with my activism, I also cut back my queer visibility at the same time I left him, because I had felt a bit like Sally Field when I got the mug. "They like me!! They really like me!!" I now see how "movement-codependent" I was, working twice as hard to make up for being perceived as "half gay" and perhaps to compensate for the rocky relationship. It didn't work.

I'm learning. I am no longer newsletter writer/editor, media committee, or treasurer, but I still send monthly listings and keep the mailing list. This is a simple task, weaned as I was on the BBWN list for years. (Thanks now go to Gail & friends, who followed me.) I'm a footsoldier in the Lavender Alliance now, not a leader, even though I was asked to be on the steering committee. I'd feel better if there were more bisexuals in the group before I did that, and besides, my libido wants to meet guys. It won't listen to my intellect at all. Oh, and another cosmic footnote: the woman I helped to elect to the city council, the first out dyke ever in that office, was the one who gave me nightmares with her vehement opposition to the B-word being included in the proclamation that year. Yet this past summer, her campaign brochure said in big red letters: a vote for her is "a vote for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people." (OK, OK, it helped that I edited it, and I did have to tell them we are not hyphenated, but I call that brochure a change of heart.) I now consider her a good and respected friend.

So to all of you in mixed queer organizations—the ever-phoenix-like GCN comes to mind—take heart. Whether you're a writer or a fighter, there may be a place for you yet. And if not, just like relationships, there are other organizations in the sea—it's their loss if you're not wanted. You deserve the best. As my ninety-year-old, three-times-married friend Hope says about boyfriends, "What these girls today don't know is: The question is not 'Do they like me?' but 'Do I like them?'"

Venceramos, honeys!

Marcia Deihl

August 9, 1994



Journey, from page 1

among them were sleeping with men. This relationship forced me to deal with all the feelings I'd run away from — anger, abandonment, guilt.

I knew I wasn't so alone anymore when I saw an ad in this very newsletter advertising a support group for formerly lesbian-identified bisexual women. I went to the first meeting and 'The Hasbians' were born. Over six years later, we're still meeting. This has been the single most helpful thing in my struggle for self worth around sexual orientation. For the first year or two, we shared our anger at lesbians for turning on us, treating us so badly, ostracizing us and basically hating us when we really felt like we were their allies. We got a chance to work out the resentments we'd stored up and we've moved on. We've healed the old hurts and freed up our energy for the present. Now we talk about other things — our jobs, relationships, etc.

It used to matter a lot to me to be accepted by lesbians. Now I don't care what "they" think and I will not waste my breath trying to get someone to like me when they don't want to. I have not been a bridge builder. As a result, I have very few lesbian-identified friends. I see this as a loss, but I see my increased self esteem as a gain. I used to feel like I'd failed at being a lesbian, and by coming out as bi, I'd failed lesbians, betrayed them. I was living a radical lesbian feminist life and I'd sold out.

Now I see myself as proud and happily bisexual. I like being around people who reflect back to me what a wonderful, worthwhile person I am — regardless of their sexual orientation.

The struggles between lesbian and bisexual women are not my fight, but I appreciate the efforts of women who choose to continue the dialog in an effort to find common ground. It is encouraging to me to see young people coming out in lesbigay settings. In some ways it's even encouraging to meet people who reject labels and see themselves as queer. It's a new world out there, and a better one than I came out into.



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E-Mail News

Mail For Women With Males

Circles is a new, unmoderated electronic mailing list for women who are currently involved in significant relationships with men but whose pasts include significant relationships with women. The contents of the list, including member's names, is confidential. The list is specifically not intended for women who are just starting to explore their lesbian or bisexual identities. You can send mail to the entire list with this address:



circles@sqwest.wimsey.bc.ca

To subscribe, unsubscribe or send other administrative messages, write to: circles-request@sqwest.wimsey.bc.ca

Circles is a relatively new list, so sign-ups are currently done semi-manually. If someone wants to subscribe, she should send mail to the request address and her name will be added. Messages to the list itself are not moderated. The sign-up moderator and administrator of the list is Marcy Thompson. If you have trouble with the *Circles* addresses, you can send mail directly to the list administrator at marcy@sqwest.wimsey.bc.ca or at marcy@world.std.com

If you feel comfortable doing so, you might introduce yourself to the list at large so we all know there's a new person out there.

Calling all SYSTers

SIE, Systers in Engineering, is a new list for lesbians and bisexual womyn in engineering and computer science. The list is intended to serve as a forum for discussing all sorts of relevant issues, as a resource for professional and personal information-sharing, and as a social network and support group. Womyn only. There is no cost to users.

To subscribe to the list, send an e-mail message to: listproc@u.washington.edu

—leave the first line blank

—the second line should read: subscribe SIE <first-name last-initial>

(Do not include the brackets. Example: subscribe SIE Dao-liang C)

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Survey Anyone?

Ziff-Davis publishing, in cooperation with the Kinsey Institute, has put together a survey on sexuality. Anyone interested in participating can send mail to ZDKSurvey@aol.com.

Calls for submissions

LOOKING
QUEER: Body
Image & Identity in the Lesbian, Bisexual, & Gay Community(ies)



The anthology will explore the ways in which our communities both challenge and perpetuate society's beauty standards.

Some questions we are looking to explore include:

What does it mean to 'look gay' or look 'like a dyke'? How are our standards different from the mainstream culture's? When are we just parodying the media image? When is the media parodying us? What place does the S&M look have in this debate? What about the fear of fat in both men's and women's communities? Are "lipstick lesbians" just perpetuating the exploitation of women? What is going on in the gay men's community? Why are so many gay men developing eating disorders? Why are so many fat activists lesbian or bisexual women? How do we feel about the way we look?

Suggested word length for articles and non fiction narratives is 700-2500 words. Longer submissions & research papers should be queried first. Some poetry considered. Reprints of previously printed material considered. All manuscripts should be typed double-spaced and include a self-addressed stamped envelope for return of manuscript and reply. Would prefer that contributors be self-identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Submissions and/or queries should be sent to: Dawn Atkins, P.O. Box 861, Iowa City, IA 52244-0861. Deadline is January 1, 1995. For more information mail directly to: datkins@blue.weeg.uiowa.com



The Lesbian and
Gay Immigration
and Asylum Rights
Task Force

is advocating for reform of discriminatory immigration laws. A key part of this effort is collecting personal stories from couples, as well as other info, that can be used to educate people, particularly those in the broader lesbigay community and those involved in "straight" immigration groups.

Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) has told the task force that the best thing they can do is to form coalitions across the US at a grassroots level to create a movement for change. This means establishing chapters of the task force in regions across the US which would participate in local grassroots organizing, provide a support group for same-sex bi-national couples, and collect more personal stories from these couples.

People in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and San Francisco have expressed interest in establishing chapters in their areas. People from other areas of the United States are also needed to establish chapters in their regions. Contact the task force to express interest in establishing a task force chapter in your area, to request information on the task force, or just to share the story of your relationship—how you met, how long you've been together and under what circumstances, and how you have been affected by INS refusal to recognize your relationship. The more stories the task force can collect the better. These stories show the variety and magnitude of people the law affects.

Write (or send donations or stories to): Lesbian and Gay Immigration and Asylum Rights Task Force, c/o Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012 Or call: Lavi Soloway (212) 995-8585.

Lesbians and Bisexuals: Shattering the Myths

by Cathleen Finn

Although most women who identify as lesbian today will not completely conform to the views I present in this article, I believe that many of the values expressed here are deeply imbedded in lesbian culture, and hold an important place in how many lesbians think about themselves and others.

Many lesbians believe that the only correct way to love women is to choose to be with women exclusively. Many women who reject this assertion, regardless of their sexual orientation, will eventually find themselves under pressure to change their behavior or will be ostracized from the lesbian community. Some women who identify as lesbian occasionally have sex with men. Bisexual women are well aware this fact because many times we are among the few people these lesbians trust enough to share this information because we will not judge them for it. A lesbian who sleeps with men may tell herself it is O.K. to do this and still consider herself a lesbian, because as long as she doesn't get emotionally involved with these men, she won't be forced to question her commitment to love women exclusively. Or perhaps it "O.K." as long as she doesn't tell certain friends or women in the larger community that she is sleeping with men. It also seems to be "O.K." for many lesbians to use men for their reproductive capacities as long as the woman in question doesn't admit to experiencing any pleasure from it.

By requiring the women they associate with to choose men exclusively, many lesbians seek to create an orthodoxy of opinion and experience that cannot exist in reality. Women arrive at a place where they are open to loving women after many different experiences. Some marry men and have children only to discover years later their capacity to love women. Others identify their feelings of attraction to women long before they have the words to put together the meanings of these feelings. Others love women and men, some at the same time and some at different times in their lives. If she chooses to, a woman can decide for herself which sexual orientation is truly hers. For most people this process of identifying as anything other than heterosexual is a difficult but ultimately personal and powerful experience. Why then, is there an inability to see that it is just as important and for a woman to identify as bisexual if that is who she truly is, as it is for a woman to identify as lesbian? The mandate for all women to experience sexuality in the same way results in subverting a movement that is meant to free women from the old regimented heterosexual thinking, replacing it with equally restrictive thinking about the correct way to love women.

Another belief among women in the lesbian community is that bisexuality does not exist. To many lesbians there are only two types of women who identify as bisexuals: those who are on their way to identifying as lesbian and those who are really just straight experimenters. Bisexuals "on their way to identifying as lesbian" are tolerated in lesbian circles, as long as they don't talk about men or their unwillingness to date women exclusively. There seems to be a belief that these women can be nurtured into being lesbians, as if all it required was to be given the proper sunlight and watering. I have found that there is no support in the lesbian community for this woman to truly explore and discover her true identity, but rather pressure is applied for her to make the "right" decision. I believe that the message is that a difficult, definitive choice is to be made to identify as lesbian and to exclusively date women. One of the strengths I feel I have as a bisexual is that I can embrace all of my thoughts, feelings, desires and past experiences without self-judgement or hatred. I don't have to worry about letting down any cloud of witnesses whether it be those who are disappointed that I am not straight or those disappointed that I am not lesbian. I can live my life making the choices I need to make without worrying what other people will think. I value being able to integrate the different aspects of myself, despite the fact that they might appear contradictory to others.

In the case of the bisexuals who are really just "straight experimenters" these fall into two categories: women who are straight who want to use other women, and those who end up being straight because they can't take the social pressure of being lesbian. The first category of bisexuals, (women who are "after" other women for sexual experimentation) are to be avoided because they are only out to break lesbians' hearts. This view is self-denigrating to lesbians in that it assumes lesbians are not adult enough to take care of themselves in their relationships. Love between any people has its inherent benefits and risks. However, I believe that lesbians who think they will avoid all possible heartache by dating only lesbian-identified women will be sadly disappointed. The view that these "straight experimenter" are merely out to break lesbian hearts also unfairly removes all of the lesbian's responsibility for the success or failure of a particular relationship. Women have sexual relationships with other women for a variety of reasons, regardless what their sexual orientation may be. There are as many lesbians who are into non-monogamous and multiple relationships as bisexual women. Women who are perceived to be interested in women for sexual adventure are seen as enemies to the lesbian community because it is believed that they use women. However, if a lesbian identified women uses men for sexual encounters or their reproductive capaci-

Lesbians continues on next page

Lesbians, from preceding page

ties that is seen as "O.K.". This type of double standard does nothing to advance ourselves as women who love women.

Women who identify as bisexual might have been involved with women long term but have since had a fall from grace (i.e., they have become involved with a man) and are therefore considered straight. Since these women are now with men they "must have been straight all along", and they just "didn't have the political backbone" to be a lesbian. This viewpoint seems particularly unfeminist because it rejects these women's right to make choices in their lives and to be who they are. By saying these women are really "just straight", these lesbians negate the value of the relationships these women had with other women. This viewpoint is a devaluing of women and women's relationships because any past experience of loving women is infinitely overshadowed by involvement with a man. Ironically, one relationship with a man becomes more definitive of sexual orientation than years of loving women.

Beyond loving women exclusively, there are many political view that go along with being a lesbian. The first is the myth that by definition all lesbians hate men. You don't have to look far to see where this idea comes from, in the mainstream it is a widely held view of lesbians. This concept is based on the incomprehensibility of why a woman would choose to be with other women in a sexist society where men are more valued than women. It is sad to me that so many lesbians accept this view of themselves as man-haters and for many reasons. First of all, I see it as a form of internalized homophobia when gay, lesbian, or bisexual people accept the mainstream culture's view of who they are. More importantly, I see it as a way of subtly buying into sexism because it makes lesbians' dislike of men stronger than their love for women. As a bisexual, I would rather see women focused on the social forces that make men the way so many of them are rather than on hating the symptom, their resulting behavior. I also believe it is futile to hate men and the energy could be much better spent on creating change. Finally, I believe that the internalized homophobic message of hating the other gender is the greatest challenge we face in getting all people in the queer community unified and working together.

Another political viewpoint pushed by many lesbians is the viability of lesbian separatism. I believe that lesbian separatism is counterproductive. Women who isolate themselves from the mainstream do exactly what mainstream society wants them to do - remove themselves from the public view. I think that only by engaging with the forces that oppress us do we apply pressure for these forces to change. When lesbians silence themselves by moving into separate communities

they are acting in complicity with the homophobia and violence in the mainstream. By withdrawing from the discourse, lesbian separatists are letting the homophobic powers that be have their way. When lesbians are absent, the living example of what is to be a lesbian is replaced by the disinformation of how you are defined by political conservatives. Silence equals death.

There is an "holier than thou" quality to separatism that is not matched with the diverse reality of women's experience of self-identification. Less and less do I believe that by calling events "lesbian only" are women really including or excluding everyone they seek to include or exclude. Women identify in different ways regardless of similarity or difference of sexual attraction or experience. Moving forward, I believe that lesbians and bisexual women together need to create an identity and culture supporting all women rather than forcing women to conform to unnecessary, and for some, unattainable standards. The reason that lesbians and bisexuals choose to be with women is not because we hate men, but because we love women, and some of us choose to be with women exclusively. Ironically the standards intended to bring women loving women together are ultimately divisive, because although many lesbians seem to agree with them, few seem to be able to put them into practise without giving up some of the freedom of expression that coming out seemed to promise them. ▼

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Two Worlds, from page 1

was moving toward a long-coveted community, toward new love. I didn't care (much) if I lost touch with my straight friends, or if they wouldn't accept me. I was going joyfully into the fold. Leaving that fold is wrenching, terrifying. I grieve over losing the lesbian community and all the things it has meant to me. I love my male lover very much, but I feel caught between two worlds with no place to go. No matter how supportive my lesbian friends are, I feel there is a difference between us now.

The main difference is I'm not as intimately ensconced in the dailyness of homophobia, and I feel the separation of a privileged experience greatly. (Although again, these feelings are coming from me, not from my lesbian friends.) I refused public displays of affection with my "boyfriend" at first, and have become enraged at his unconsciousness about homophobia. Worse yet are his straight straight friends (female and male) who drive me nuts with their ignorance of their heterosexual privilege and the impacts sexism has on their lives. I try to see myself as an educator for them or just avoid politics, but most of the time I don't enjoy their company. In the lesbian community, the expectation that I would spend time with my lover's friends was not disheartening since I always felt a common bond, no matter how apolitical any lesbian was. Trying to find enlightened friendships in the straight world seems very hard. They seem like aliens to me, and probably I to them. This remains an unresolved issue.

I confess more recently to indulging in hetero privilege. What a luxury to walk down the street holding hands with someone I love without being in fear for my life!!! What a pleasure to mention my lover and have non-gay people be happy for me instead of uncomfortable hearing about it. Sometimes I hate myself for indulging in heterosexual privilege; sometimes I angrily and joyfully partake in the ease of it all.

One of the most fascinating aspects of dating a man is re-experiencing aspects of sexism I'd forgotten all about. Being with a man again has been like a primer in sexism. For example, I found myself feeling safe in a way I haven't felt since coming out as a lesbian. I realize it is a mythology of safety—I imagine other men won't harass me (e.g., new landlords, men in restaurants, etc.) and other men are less likely to attack me because I'm now dating one. No matter that no one could tell by looking at me who I sleep with. It's just a false sense of safety because of heterosexism and sexism. I had forgotten what it's like to be out somewhere with a man and be ignored completely in a hardware store, in a restaurant, etc. Luckily, my new lover is conscious about some of these things, and helps educate others about their mistaken prejudices. One thing my male lover is not as conscious of is

something I perceive as possessiveness. Men tend to touch their female lovers a lot in public to, in my opinion, indicate a sort of ownership, as well as affection. (Lesbians might do this too if it was safe to do so, but they haven't in my experience.) When my male lover touches me in a way that feels more possessive than affectionate I bristle and push him away.

Another example of re-learning about sexism is watching the subtle way my personality sometimes seems to shift into more stereotypically female behavior when I'm with my male lover. I have to focus and refocus again on my own power, my own life, myself as a woman, my priorities related to wimmin, etc. At first, I caught myself enjoying aspects of the female role (not a huge surprise, since I'm more femme than butch). But it's familiar and comfortable the way an abusive relationship can feel right if that's all you've ever known, or if that's what you were raised with. My male lover is not at all dominant, pushy, traditionally masculine, or overbearing. But just his maleness sometimes triggers stereotypically female behavior in me due to sexism. Luckily, I'm naturally defiant to an extent so I'm not likely to get sucked into any typical female role. One of my challenges is identifying what stereotypically female behaviors are things I like doing (e.g., cooking), and find a way to do them that is not oppressive or part of a sexist dynamic. My male lover is willing to work on this with me, but sometimes wishes I could spend less time analyzing and more time just being.

I find it both fascinating and frustrating to experience all this from a relatively conscious perspective based on my lesbian experiences and feminist education. When I was living as a dyke, I dealt with homophobia every day. Now I'm dealing more with sexism every day (such wonderful choices).

Dating a man has been and continues to be a surprising opportunity for growth. I believe that for me this relationship has everything to do with who this man is as an independent person, and who he is in my life, and very little to do with the fact that he is a man. I can't imagine dating any other man and remain generally uninterested in males. I am still very attracted to wimmin, and know if this relationship ends, I'll go back to being a lesbian. But in the meantime, I'm in love with a man, and I don't know quite what to call myself in sexual terms. I feel I can't claim the term lesbian, and I don't like the term bisexual—it feels incomplete, and I don't have a sense of belonging to a group with that term. So for now, I'm a lesbian who is in love with a man, and struggling to enjoy the delights of that relationship and work out my identity and community in this strange new context. ▼

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CALENDAR, from page 12



October 23 • Sunday
BBWN/LABIA* Brunch, noon at Rebecca and Annie's in Dorchester (on the Red line). Directions: Annie at (617) 825-3985. (* *Lesbians and Bisexuals in Action!*)

October 28-30 • Friday-Sunday
1994 Southeastern Regional Bisexual Conference. Camp Chestnut Ridge, Efland, North Carolina. \$80, sliding scale. For more information, contact the NC Bisexual Network, 207 S. Elliott Road, Suite 118, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. (919) 834-4494. e-mail: brownm@ils.unc.edu

October 29 • Saturday
Halloween Party at Debbie and Kevin Block-Schwenk's. 8pm. Mixed Male/Female crowd. Pumpkin pie and other snacks will be provided, BYOB. We'll be showing "The Nightmare Before Christmas." Bring a ghost story or a Halloween-based song or game. Costumes not necessary. In Allston, T accessible, no (indoor) smoking. We have two cats, each half black. Call (617) 731-9060 for directions.



October 30 • Sunday
BIVERSITY Sunday Brunch, 1pm at Arirang House, 162 Mass. Ave, Boston. Between Symphony and Auditorium T stops.

November 2 • Wednesday
Coming Out as Bisexual. See October 5.

November 9 • Wednesday
BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

November 11 • Friday
BiWomen submissions deadline. Theme: Work Issues (submissions on all subjects welcome). Send calendar entries, essays, poems, art, ads, whatever, to: BiWomen, BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.

BIVERSITY Bi Game Night. Cards, Scrabble, Mah Jong, etc. 7:30pm. Call Steve or Bhadrika, (617) 625-5348.

November 14 • Monday
BiWomen volunteer night. 7:30-9pm. Read the mail, type articles, plan for future issues of the newsletter, make phone calls, chat with other bi women. Please join us!

November 16 • Wednesday
Coming Out as Bisexual. See October 5.

November 17-20 • Thursday-Sunday
InQueery/InTheory/InDeed: Sixth North American Conference on Lesbian, Gay, and BISEXUAL Studies; University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

Justice for All

A lesbian law professor from New York became the nation's first openly gay African-American federal judge this summer. Deborah Batts, 47, was sworn in June 23 as a federal district judge in Manhattan after winning Senate Judiciary Committee approval May 5 and confirmation the following day by the full Senate.



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November 19 • Saturday

BIVERSITY Brunch, 11am at Johnny D's, Holland St., Davis Sq. (Red Line) Somerville.

November 27 • Sunday

BIVERSITY Brunch, 1pm at Pizzeria Uno's in Kenmore Square (Green line).

November 28 • Monday

BiWomen newsletter stuffing volunteer night. Share stories, meet other bi women, help get the newsletter out. The more who show up the faster it goes! 7-9pm.

Ongoing Events
(continued on p. 11)



Wednesdays:
Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

1st and 3rd Wednesdays:

Coming Out as Bisexual. A free informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 338-9595.

3rd Thursdays

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm at the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. Free, open to public. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

Every Other Saturday:

"Write with Women" 12:30-2:30 at the Women's Center in Cambridge. Short writings on personal topics in a friendly, positive atmosphere. Info: Women's Center at (617) 354-8807.

The Bi Office

is the Bisexual Resource Office, 95 Berkeley Street, Suite 613, Boston.

(617) 338-9595

Ongoing Events

First Mondays:

Support Group for Anti-Racist White Women, 6:30-8:30pm at the Women's Theological Center, 140 Clarendon St., 6th fl., Boston. No charge, donation requested. Info: (617) 536-8782.

Fourth Mondays:

Women and Disability Think Tank, 7pm 4th Monday of every month, 282 Lamartine St, JP. Info: Connie Panzarino, Project on Women & Disability, 524-0921. Wheelchair accessible. ASL by request.

Tuesdays:

Bisexual Women's Rap Group, 7:30-9:30pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge. All women welcome. Info, topics: (617) 354-8807.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Freedom Trail Band Rehearsals,

Concert and marching band, no auditions. 7:30-9:30pm. Location and info: Kathy (617) 628-6219.



1st & 3rd Tuesdays:

Bisexual Issues Rap Group at the New Haven Women's Center, 614 Orange St., (corner Bishop) New Haven, Conn. Call to specify wheelchair access or ASL interpreting needs. Voice (203) 776-2658, TTY and voice (203) 397-2381.



(continued on p. 11)

CALENDAR

October 1-2 • Saturday-Sunday.

Fourth Annual Women's Studies Conference, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, CT. Topic: Women's Voices/Women's Powers: Theory, Action, Transformation. Featured Speakers: The Hensons of Camp Sister Spirit and Ntozake Shange, author and playwright of "For colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf" and Sassafras. Registration materials can be obtained by calling (203) 392-6747.

October 2 • Sunday

Camp Sister Spirit. Brenda and Wanda Henson. Lesbians under siege from Ovett, Mississippi. 7pm, Old Cambridge Baptist Church. Info: 666-0828.

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October 5 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. A free informal support group for people who think they may be bisexual or attracted to more than one gender. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. Sponsored by the Bisexual Resource Center. Info: (617) 338-9595.

October 8 • Saturday

BIVERSITY Movie Outing: *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, playing at 1pm at the Nickelodeon Theater, Commonwealth Ave., Boston. Meet near the concessions stand at 12:40pm.

BIVERSITY is the Boston-area, mixed-gender, multicultural bisexual network. For more info call the Bi Office at (617) 338-9595.

October 9 • Sunday

BIVERSITY Outing: Apple Picking! Meet at the Bi Office at noon to carpool.



October 11 • Tuesday

National Coming Out Day!

October 14 • Friday

An Evening with Luisah Teish. 8-10pm, place TBA, \$5-20, sliding scale. Info: Women's Theological Center, 536-8782.



October 15 • Saturday

Daughter of the Promise. Luisah Teish. All day workshop for African-American women. 9-4pm, place TBA. \$50-75, sliding scale. Info: Women's Theological Center, 536-8782.

BIVERSITY Brunch, 11am at Baja on Dartmouth St near the Back Bay T stop (Orange line and commuter rail).

BIVERSITY Video Party, 2pm at Jay's. Call (617) 730-3786 for directions.



Fall Potluck Dinner at Susan Santucci's in Cambridge. 6:30-8:30pm. Near Mount Auburn Cemetery. For directions, call (617) 354-3599.



October 19 • Wednesday

BIVERSITY "Bi Bi Miss American Pie" Potluck Dessert and Tea Party at Miriam's, 8pm. Call 776-7640.

Coming Out as Bisexual.

See October 5.

October 22 • Saturday

Nuts and Bolts: Feminist/Lesbian Publishing in the 21st Century. A workshop led by Nancy Bereano, editor and publisher of Firebrand Books. 1-5pm, 186 Hampshire St., Cambridge, MA. Info: New Words Bookstore, 876-5310.

BIVERSITY Scandalously Late Rendezvous, 11pm at the Blue Diner, corner Kneeland and South Streets, near South Station (Red line).

CALENDAR continues on page 11

BI BENEFITS

by Sharon Gonsalves

What is a workplace issue for bisexuals? Damned if I know. If you're talking about what benefits I need, then sometimes I feel like my needs are so different from my co-workers' that I wouldn't know where to begin. Other times it seems my benefits suit me fine as a single woman living alone with no dependents. It's so much easier being invisible. I'm sure there are some other people who have needs similar to mine who aren't bisexual, but aren't married or raising children or taking care of elderly parents or going to school. If you're talking about basic respect from co-workers and a healthy work environment, then my needs are probably a lot like other people's, but my choices are very different from my co-workers. I just need there to be room for the way I live my life. I pick and choose who to tell what about how I live, but I overhear plenty of conversations that make me feel like I'm from another planet and that people just wouldn't understand the things I face.

For example, yesterday I overheard a conversation some co-workers were having about giving blood. We have regular blood drives at my workplace. I got kicked out of a workplace blood drive once, deferred for life as a donor, because I admitted to having been sexually involved with bisexual men. I've tested HIV negative several times and practice safer sex with all my partners, but the blood suckers couldn't hear me. I felt humiliated at my removal and fought my deferment (and won), but you can bet I won't be giving blood at my workplace any time soon.

One co-worker is about to get married and I've been hearing about her wedding plans for the last 5 months. Some gay people would like to be able to get married. I've been to my share of commitment ceremonies and they are nothing like the grand scale that the wedding industry feeds prospective newlyweds. As a feminist and a gay person, I am opposed to legal marriage and I am sick of hearing about what songs this woman wants the DJ to play at her reception. Maybe my employer should provide earplugs. For now, I buy my own.

In the way benefits are structured at my company, there seems to be a big emphasis on meeting the needs of employees with families. Some bisexuals are married and have families and these benefits would meet their needs. Not me. I have very little contact with my family of origin



because of my history as an incest survivor. I have been involved in an intentional community and have looked for living situations where I can have family without being "married" (coupled) or having children. The majority of my co-workers are doing the nuclear family thing. I am not interested in living that way and I'm concerned about growing older without a "family". What benefits would I need to get me through my later years as part of a group of unrelated friends?

BENEFITS continues on page 3

LUCKY SO FAR

by Linda Blair

I'm one of the lucky ones. Since coming out as bi two years ago, I've had dozens of cool co-workers and accepting bosses, and judging from all the stories I've heard from so many fellow bi-folk, that puts me in a rather small minority.

When I came out as bi in the summer of 1992, I was working at a radical non-profit solidarity group in Boston. This was a wonderful environment to come out in. For nearly a year before I came out publicly as bi, one co-worker had been invaluable in helping me to come to terms with my attraction to women; taking long lunches with me and listening to my hopes, fears and desires; encouraging me and offering advice; and drawing from her own experiences as a lesbian to answer my questions as best she could. She even went so far as to take me dancing at Indigo to help me contain at least some of the all-en-

LUCKY continues on page 4

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Gail Zacharias
Laura Sachs
Linda Blair
Sharon
Debbie Block-Schwenk
W.B.

A note on the BiNet Northeast Rep Elections:

by Stephanie Berger

You may remember two issues ago, I solicited nominations for the next NE BiNet regional rep to fill the position that Laura Perez had occupied. Because Kirsten Isgro was the only person to agree to run after extensive outreach, I decided to forego the expense and energy to pull together an "official" ballot and voting. She was the only one... I feel confident that Kirsten is going to do an incredible job and be an asset and resource to BiNet and the national and regional bi communities at large.

The blurb she submitted is as follows:

Having worked in the field of sexuality education for over 8 years, I bring to BiNet a vast amount of knowledge and enthusiasm about bisexual identity. I see bisexuality in the larger continuum of sexual and gender identity, behavior, and orientation. My various volunteer and paid work experiences have included community organizing for AIDS organizations, Take Back the Night rallies, feminist roundtable discussions, and sexual assault prevention agencies. I have a strong commitment to providing outreach to bisexuals, particularly in the rural communities within Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire where networking opportunities are scarce. Because I work at Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (the fourth largest affiliate in the country), I have a number of contacts and resources available to me that would be beneficial to creating a bisexual community within northern New England.

I helped organize the first Northeast Bisexual Community Meeting in Montpelier, Vermont in April 1994. I am currently working with other local bisexual folk to create a Vermont Bisexual Network; in November we will present a workshop at the Vermont Lesbian and Gay Coalition's annual town meeting. [See article in page 10.]

To get in contact with Kirsten - her home telephone number is 802-658-9554. To get in contact with Stephanie - her home telephone number is 617-666-3149. ▽

BiWomen is published bi-monthly.

Editorial Team for this issue of BiWomen:

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Stephanie C.
Stephanie Berger

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay people within the larger society.

Coming in BiWomen

The theme for the February/March issue:

How BBWN operates:

Who does what?

How is the newsletter produced?

Where's the office?

Stephanie, Linda, Kathleen, Robyn, Kathrine, Laura, Debbie, Ananda, Gail, Stephanie, etc....who are these women, anyway?

How can I get involved?

How do I organize an event?

◆ If you have ANY regular involvement with BBWN, if you are responsible for ANY particular task, please contribute to this issue! The goal of this issue is to open the doors for more women to get involved, as well as to act as a helpful guide for other organizations. ◆

Possible future themes:

Humor Diversity Non-Monogamy

DEADLINE for the February/March issue:

Friday, January 13, 1994

Please provide submissions on paper (typed or handwritten) or on floppy disk (PC or Mac), and include a name and phone number if possible.

If you do not want your name published, please tell us! Otherwise we may assume that you do not mind being listed as a contributor. You may contribute anonymously, or just use your first name, if you wish.

Send articles, calendar entries, letters, art, news and views to:

BiWomen
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140



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BENEFITS, from page 1

There's an award-winning child care center at my workplace, which I think is great, but it's not something I'm likely to use or need. Maternity and parenting leaves are generous. Job sharing is available although hard to find, and many women at my workplace are working from home half the time after having a child. Men, too, are taking advantage of alternative work schedules to help with child care.

Then there are the lunchtime wellness lectures. Some of these address my needs. I met my chiropractor this way. Most don't — How to help your child do better in school, Caring for elderly parents, Balancing work and family, Forming a relationship with your child's teacher, Finding quality day care. Not my issues. How about Vegetarianism in a meat eating world, Finding affordable housing, Standing up to the anti-gay backlash or Coming out to your boss and co-workers?

I finally found a stable living situation after years of renting apartments and changing roommates or moving every year or two. Now I live in a limited equity coop, a city-subsidized affordable housing situation in which I share a mortgage and building management responsibilities with eleven other people. I am the president of this coop and I feel very responsible for making sure things go smoothly. I use many skills in this part of my life and the coop takes up a good part of my time outside of work. Sometimes I need personal time to meet a contractor much like any homeowner would. I use my computer or the Xerox machine occasionally to do coop related business. I took out a loan for my down payment and used a benefit to borrow money against my 401K plan. I have my own one bedroom apartment and I have a community of people to share the load with. This is ideal for me. As a nonmonogamous person, I've set up my life to allow room for more than one partner. Some relationships are more "primary" than others or more day to day as opposed to long distance. Maybe I need better travel benefits, more time off or a Watts line so I can call or visit my lovers more often. I use my workplace Internet connection to keep in touch with long distance friends.

Many of my co-workers have pictures of their spouse and/or children displayed in their offices. I can't imagine putting up pictures of my partners. The average person at my workplace probably would not understand or accept nonmonogamy so I choose not to discuss it. I have one co-worker who is cheating on his wife and he confided in me because he knew I had more than one relationship. Being in an open relationship is different from being dishonest and although it was nice to talk openly with someone at work about my relationships, I thought he was slime and didn't feel like we had much in common.

My health benefits are appropriate for me, but at one time my partner needed better health benefits than those offered by her Social Change Non Profit employer. We discussed using the spousal equivalent benefits my company offers (very progressive), but they would require us to live together, share expenses and be exclusive in our partnership. I didn't qualify on all three counts. These benefits are only available if I use the hetero model for relationships which doesn't work for me. Living with my partner is not a goal of mine and has nothing to do with how devoted, intimate, long term or committed a relationship can be.

I see a chiropractor on an ongoing basis for my general health. This was only covered for one year. I see a therapist on an ongoing basis for my general health. This is covered at \$1250 per year which is less than half of what it costs. That \$1250 is a lot more than most companies give. (Oh, the price of sanity.) My eye exams, glasses, dental and gynecological are covered at 80%. No problem there.

I am Jewish, but if I take Jewish holidays off I would have to use my personal time. I am given Christmas Day off and am usually sent home early on Christmas Eve. (There's no escaping Christmas.) I get Columbus Day off which I see as a day of mourning for Native Americans. I get Martin Luther King Day, which I can feel good about, President's Day, which I don't care about, Patriot's Day, just in case I want to run in the Boston Marathon, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and my birthday. I'd love to take Gay Pride Day or National Coming Out Day or the day after any major Gay demonstration off. Maybe these would be part of a bi benefits package.

Probably the most significant benefit I get at work is the opportunity to work on diversity related issues as an out bisexual. I'm on a lesbigay speakers bureau and get time off to speak to groups of employees about what it's like being gay at work. I'm on a diversity advisory board to senior management where I meet regularly with co-workers from various backgrounds

BENEFITS continues on next page

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Bi The Way

When you see one of those lists of "100 Famous Lesbians" be aware that many of the people commonly listed actually had partners of both genders (e.g. Sappho, Bessie Smith, Virginia Woolf, etc.)

- from a Polysexual Resources List compiled by Ivy Bressen

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CALLING ALL BI POETS!

A group in England is putting together a bi poetry anthology.

Poems on or about bisexuality or by bisexuals may be sent to:

Louisa Wall
20 Arundel Gardens
Notting Hill
London W11
England

The deadline is 31 March 1995.

Digital Queers, an organization of lesbian, gay, bi and transgendered high tech professionals and aficionados, is organizing a chapter in New England. For info call DQ at (415)252-6282 or send email to "digiqma@aol.com".

BENEFITS, from page 3

who are concerned about these issues. I learn so much here about our different perspectives and I gain the confidence to speak up when something's not right.

Another perk at my job is the queer discussion database that connects all the queers at my company nationwide. This is a great way to find out what's happening in the community - news, events, etc. It's also a place to dish and gossip and get campy. It is widely read by queers and straights alike and once you find it (it's called Lambda and can be found on a public servers) you're connected to a group of people who will make you feel at home.

There are other ways that I feel supported at work, like the option to invest my 401K money in socially responsible mutual funds, and for the most part I have no complaints. Breaking through the isolation, feeling different or like the 'only one', is the hardest thing I've faced at work. Being confident and brave enough to come out has opened some doors for me and made me much more comfortable. I'm lucky to be working for a company that values and recognizes it's lesbigay employees and where it's safe to be out.

As far as workplace issues for bisexuals go, I'm still clueless. Part of what's so great about the bi community is the diversity of models for relationships, choices of living situations, sexual practices and preferences, all of which are 100% acceptable and 100% bisexual. What we need are benefits that meet the broadest range of needs imaginable and an accepting environment so we don't have to hide who we are. If we can bring our full selves in the door at our workplaces, we'll be that much more productive, creative and valuable to our employers. ▽

Wear your Bi Pride on your chest.

For just \$15 (or \$14 if you come to the Bi Office) you get a Bisexual Pride t-shirt in black or deep purple sizes small to xx-large. Please indicate size and color with order.

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LUCKY, from page 1

compassing curiosity and desire to be close to women that I just couldn't get away from, yet wasn't quite ready to satisfy.

Every co-worker and member of our collective had been thrilled for me that summer and fall. One-by-one, I told those that I worked closely with every day about my bisexuality and got nothing but encouragement. Everyone was sincerely happy for me. I had sort of a three tier mental list of people to come out to: 1. co-workers and close friends who I knew would be accepting, 2. other friends, and 3. my mom and other family members. I was glad and grateful to realize that virtually everyone I came out to, including everyone at work, was bi-positive.

Since I saw them almost every day, co-workers were the ones I shared my joy with the most as I first became involved with Boston's bi community in general and shortly thereafter with one of its members in particular. For those first few intoxicating months, I must have been the most distracted, as well as the most elated, solidarity activist on the East coast.

From the very start, I knew my four nights/week work hours would have to change if I were to keep up the eight-year relationship I had with my male partner, this new and exciting relationship with my first female lover and maintain a new-found connection to the bi community in general. To my surprise, my co-workers came through for me in this department too. With everyone's participation, our collective worked out a method to cover all of our evening responsibilities and let me have 2 - 3 nights off a week to focus on my rapidly expanding social life.

In fact, perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the initial support I got around being out at work back then was not the bi-friendly attitude of my co-workers, but their matter-of-fact acceptance of my decision to adopt a non-monogamous lifestyle. Several of these folks had some thoughts to offer from first-hand past experiences with open relationships themselves, the most memorable being simply "non-monogamy is hard." Touché.

Just over a year ago I left the relative safety of that "movement" environment for a (pardon the pun) "straight" job. I was prepared for the worst, but have been pleasantly surprised.

Take my current boss for example. He's concerned about all the kinds of things that bosses are supposed to be concerned about, and he and I have had an "issue" or two come up about work situations. He expects a lot from me in terms of job performance and won't hesitate to both reward me when I come through for him nor let me know just where he stands when I don't. He cares about whether or not I come to work on time, and how hard I work once I get

LUCKY continues on next page

LUCKY, from preceding page

there. The one thing he couldn't give a damn about is what gender the people I love or are attracted to are. Just as it should be.

Respect and tolerance are two things that all of us should be able to expect from our work environments. As an out bisexual, I've had both and considerably more. Even in the relatively mainstream job that I'm in now, I feel comfortable being out to mostly everyone. I'm fairly active in the bi community and in general feel safe talking about the social and activist things I'm involved in with co-workers. Their reactions have made me feel I can trust them. There's something really nice about having one of your managers ask "Did you go to the parade? I watched it on TV" the Monday after Pride weekend, or look at your pictures of Stonewall and the Gay Games with enthusiasm and ask if you "carried the big rainbow flag" in the march.

Even more comforting was just hearing a few sympathetic words from a co-worker when she saw me outside of the office, clearly distraught, a few days after my same-sex partner and I had broken up. Far from having to make up some lame excuse about why I was upset, I had gotten plenty of encouragement not only from her but several other co-workers about the generally tough time my partner and I had been having during the last few months of our relationship. This sort of acceptance is always important, but when lots of other things in life are feeling extra-hard, just being treated "normal" is invaluable.

One word about being out as bi with lesbian and gay co-workers. I just started a part-time job with a company that produces a "gay and lesbian" publication. It was in large part the experience I've had editing this newsletter, and other activism in the bi community, that helped me land the job. I hope this is a good omen for the future of lesbian/gay/bi relations in general. Personally, I haven't had a lot of contact with the Gay and Lesbian communities and, despite all the bi-phobia I know is out there, I'm hoping I'll be just as lucky in avoiding it at my new job as I've been so far in other work environments.

I don't have any deep analysis of why I've had such positive work experiences so far. I feel relatively comfortable with myself and initial acceptance has given me confidence to come out in situations where I otherwise might not have. Mostly though, I just feel I've been lucky enough to find open-minded co-workers who have better things to do with their time than outcast me for being queer. This doesn't seem like a lot to ask, but given the disparate nature and general lack of tolerance in our society, I think it's a lot to expect. I plan to keep active in the community to increase bi visibility and acceptance, but I'm still keeping my fingers crossed that my luck holds out. ▼

REVIEW

The Opposite Sex is Neither

by Robyn Ochs

Kate Bornstein, a male to female transsexual and author of a new book *Gender Outlaw*, performed "The Opposite Sex is Neither," a one-woman performance piece, as part of the Out on the Edge series put on by Boston's Theater Offensive September 23 - October 1.

Bornstein plays a goddess in training who has been sent back from the future to complete a training exercise: she is to channel through her person seven individuals who have transcended identity in order to move them toward higher awareness.

Maggie, the goddess in training, is delightful. She comes, from some future place and time, armed only with her training manual, from which she gets her incantations as well as an amusing briefing on late 20th-century life. Referring to her manual, she looks up, startled, and says "You really think it's important what gender you are?" She is amused and surprised that we still believe that there are only two genders, and tells us that we "are in for one heck of a surprise in the next century."

Each of the characters channeled through Maggie are individuals who confound gender. They include a drag queen dying of AIDS; two individuals on the operating table about to undergo a sex change (one male to female, one female to male); a character whom she calls "Solid Jackson," whose story parallels that of the late Billy Tipton, a female jazz musician who lived for many years as a man (with a wife who swore she didn't know that her husband was female) in order to be able to perform her music; a transsexual who has just been bashed; and a transgendered member of a church choir. Through her characters, Bornstein makes us aware of the cultural forces which limit, restrict, and sometimes even kill us, physically and spiritually. One of her characters talks about joining innumerable support groups such as AA, in search of a place to fit in. None, ultimately, are the right fit. Gender, she says, is just another category to belong to.

What does all of this have to do with bisexuals? We live in a culture which tries to force both gender and sexual orientation into binary, mutually exclusive categories. We are taught to emphasize the differences between male and female, straight and gay, and we are not told the subversive truth: not everything fits neatly into one category or the other. Some of us, by our existence, subvert these categories and make other people, who are still trying to squeeze us into column A or

Opposite Sex continues on page 7



Kate Bornstein

Speak Out!

Write to your newsletter! Send us your letters, poetry, opinions, questions, essays, art, jokes, praise, criticism, news clippings . . .

▼
BiWomen

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The Cambridge Women's Center sponsors a Sexual Harassment Support group. If you are experiencing harassment at work, or want to know how to respond if harassment occurs, contact the Women's Center at (617) 354-8807 or Louise Banar at (617) 254-1729.

MEMO: ON DIVERSITY

by Lisa Sheehy



The following is a memo that I wrote a couple of years ago to my fifty co-workers (management and staff) at a non-profit organization providing legal assistance to low-income people (I will call it "ABC Legal".) My primary objective was to increase awareness of sexual orientation diversity and to encourage the organization to become a more affirmatively welcoming place for lesbian, gay, and bisexual workers and clients. My personal coming out was a secondary purpose.

For context, let me say that most of my co-workers shared progressive politics and a commitment to social justice. We were a diverse group in race, age, class origins and religion (including several evangelical Christians.) Most, including most of the management, were women. In general, I enjoyed working at ABC Legal and believed deeply in its mission. Nevertheless, I grew increasingly disturbed by the lack of awareness of sexual orientation issues, and felt isolated as a bisexual person. My concern peaked during a workplace "diversity awareness" process, when I saw that, despite a shared ethic of valuing diversity, many of my co-workers had little concrete knowledge of or sensitivity to lesbian, gay, or bisexual concerns or cultures, and did not even seem to notice the gap. That is when I circulated this memo.

The response was generally positive. Although some never acknowledged receiving it, others initiated searching discussions with me, asked for more information, and supported extending health coverage to domestic partners. I offer the memo here in the hope that it may help others trying to create more affirming workplaces.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Everyone at ABC
FROM: Lisa Sheehy
RE: Sexual/affectional orientation diversity at ABC
DATE: March 23, 1993

I am writing this memo after considerable thought. I've contemplated writing something of this kind off and on for months, but have been spurred to do it now because of my reactions to the March 3rd ABC staff meeting about diversity.

I wish it were convenient for me to raise this issue in a more personal way than in a memo to the world, but I've decided it's more important for me to put this out into the debate about diversity at ABC and that it would be too contrived and time-consuming to try to talk to each person individually. On the flip side, I worry that this kind of personal disclosure is pretty uncharacteristic for me and may seem invasive to some people. I hope I manage not to alienate anyone and would only add that I really would welcome the chance to talk to anyone who would like to follow up on this in further conversation. Please

let me know! I'm aware that sexual and affectional orientation may be a challenging topic and that we may have different values concerning it. I am eager to talk about this even if our values and opinions differ.

So why am I bringing this up, and why now?

I was disturbed that at the meeting about diversity, there was no mention of or apparent awareness of diversity in sexual and affectional orientation during the course of over an hour of discussion of almost every other aspect of diversity. Eventually I pointed this out, but I had the feeling that it would have gone entirely unrecognized if I hadn't done so. The feeling of invisibility at the meeting was particularly stark, given the topic of the meeting, but I have not experienced much active support for sexual/affectional diversity at ABC at other times, either.

I was especially struck by the silence at the meeting because one of the forms of oppression lesbian, gay and bisexual people often experience is invisibility. It can be nearly as harmful as overt discrimination or physical violence, which we also confront.

Obviously, one of the things that I can do to help raise visibility is to "come out" myself, and I am writing this in part for that reason. So, to those of you who don't know already, I am coming out! I am happily and proudly bisexual, and being a bisexual person is an important part of my experience, culture, and personal identity. I am also an activist for les/bi/gay liberation and participate in a number of bisexual and les/bi/gay groups. I am "out" (not hidden) in pretty much all the aspects of my life. While I haven't hidden my orientation here, I haven't made a point of announcing it, and realize that I might be assumed to be heterosexual, I'm coming out to avoid perpetuating that assumption.

While different people have varying definitions, I identify as bisexual because my primary partner relationships have been both with women and with men, and because I am oriented in my emotional commitments and my sexual attraction both to women and to men. I believe that I have always had this orientation on an innate level and that I choose to encourage its expression in my life.

Bisexuality may be an identity as well as a behavior pattern. My identity as a bi-emotional/bisexual person is constant, regardless of whether I am in a partnership with a woman or a man, or with both, or not in a partnership at all at different times. This underscores the point that, in order to support and appreciate diversity in a sexual/affectional orientation, it is important to remember one can't always guess a person's identity from seeing part of their behavior. This is especially important to remember when trying to be supportive of diversity like sexual/affectional orientation, since gay and bisexual and lesbian

MEMO continues on next page

MEMO, from preceding page

people aren't generally identifiable unless we announce ourselves by coming out.

I think that we all can help to create a supportive environment by trying not to make assumptions about each other's orientations and identities. For example, a married person is not necessarily straight. Someone in a partnership with a person of the same sex may be lesbian or gay, or may be bisexual. A person who has not been in any relationships may have a definite sexual orientation/identity. Most of us also tend to assume monogamy, when in fact people may have more than one significant partner. Our assumptions may make people who don't fit into them feel invisible, abnormal or misunderstood.

Invisibility is a burden even when there's no overt lack of acceptance of lesbian, bisexual and gay people, and I would like us to be more aware of this at ABC. I don't expect much overt heterosexism at ABC. I don't think ABC discriminates institutionally against people on the basis of sexual orientation; our anti-discrimination statement makes this explicit. I also think that we at ABC generally believe in ending the various manifestations of oppression in our society; we probably generally agree that homophobia is an oppression and want to end it. Some of the people who have been with the program a long time have told me that there have been several gay or lesbian people here in the past, who were accepted without any ado or fuss. Nevertheless, writing this feels like a significant emotional risk to me.

The fact that there have been lesbian or gay people here in earlier years and that in fact, there are likely other gay, bisexual or lesbian people here now doesn't diminish the present experience of invisibility which I, at least, have felt. As one of the newer people here, I don't really experience that sense of active acceptance, even if it was taken for granted in earlier years.

So I want to rock the boat and I would love your help in doing so. Breaking invisibility is not just a matter of trying not to make assumptions as to people's orientation. It is an active process of acknowledging (verbally, out loud) the importance of sexual/affectional diversity in our conversations and staff meetings, regardless of how many les/bi/gay people we think are working at ABC. It could mean becoming more aware of and sensitive to our les/bi/gay clients. It is a process of learning about les/bi/gay experiences and cultures. If you are heterosexual or married, it could mean experimenting with your own visibility — for example, by referring to your spouse as your "partner" for a while and by using gender-neutral terms to refer to her or him — this can be an interesting way to experience your own and other's reactions and assumptions. It is realizing that the presently growing movement for lesbian, gay and bisexual civil rights is an event of great

significance, historically, morally, legally and personally, no matter what our orientation — it means sharing our excitement, fears or reservations about that.

There are a lot of ways to rock the boat, and I know I've only thought of a few. I'm just trying to start by making waves where I can! My hope in writing this is that it will increase our awareness and acknowledgment of this aspect of our diversity, and help us to revitalize an atmosphere that embraces it. Thanks for bearing with me through this long memo. I would be more than delighted to talk more about this.



off our backs



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Opposite Sex from page 5

column B, very uneasy. We can learn a great deal about gender and sex roles by examining the tremendous discomfort engendered by people who fall outside of acceptable categories, either by their own gender, or by the gender of their partners.

So check out Kate Bornstein: read her book or go to see her performance the next time she's in town. And if you live in the Boston area, you can get on the Theater Offensive's mailing list by calling (617) 542-4214. ▶



Bi Visibility

The November 16 Ricki Lake Show topic was, you guessed it, "bisexuality," featuring former BBWN stalwart Ilta Adler, now in graduate school at NYU. You go, girl! If anyone taped the show, please let us know by calling (617) 338-9595 or writing to the BRC, Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140. We'd like a copy for the Bi Archives.

MORE THOUGHTS ON COMING OUT

What Bisexuals Can Teach the World

By Debbie Block-Schwenk

This past Coming Out Day, I was doing a lot of thinking. What, in addition to contributing to gay and lesbian rights, does coming out do for bisexuals? Of course, we're trying to establish a "bisexual identity" as an acceptable one. But gays and lesbians are a minority of the population; bisexuals may be, too. Can we do anything for the "straight" population? I think we can — I think bisexuals have a lot of important issues and ideas to teach the world. So, I hope these belated Coming Out Day thoughts will inspire all of us to be true to ourselves and help change the world for the better.

My husband teases me that I see a great distinction between "sexuality" and "sex." I do, and I think this is an important concept that probably only bisexuals can teach the world. Much of the literature from the Bi Office emphasizes this point — sexual orientation is not dependent on behavior. You are bi if you are attracted to, or perhaps just deeply interested in, people of both genders. To me, this means that sexuality (which includes sexual orientation) is not dependent on behavior.

This is important because while sex is what one does, sexuality is what one has. Sexuality is a sense of oneself as a sexual and sensual being, comfortable with the idea of sharing pleasure with a willing partner or partners (according to one's own personal values and standards). While sex is an extension of sexuality, a person can have a healthy sense of sexuality and not be having sex. This is an ideal definition — one of the problems with our society is that we so repress sexuality that people see sexuality as meaningful only when they're having sex. I think this a huge problem with teenagers — having sex is a coming-of-age type ritual because it proves that you have sexuality, i.e. you are an adult. This is an unhealthy attitude towards sex and sexuality — how can you value your sexual partner if the experience is only to prove to yourself and your friends that you are a sexual being. Having to "prove" that you are sexual by doing something is reminiscent of a fraternity initiation where the potential pledges have to prove that they are tough enough —

and subservient enough — to make it into the frat.

I'm no expert on school sex education programs, but the right-wing emphasis on abstinence is still repressing sexuality. It doesn't acknowledge that people are naturally, positively sexual beings, nor that some of them may be mature enough to have meaningful sexual experiences before they are lucky enough to meet a life partner. How do we teach youth — and all people — that sexuality is good, and a man or woman with a healthy, mature sense of his or her own sexuality will be able to make positive and responsible decisions about how and with whom to express that sexuality?

The Bisexual movement has a vital role here. By unraveling the myths about bisexual promiscuity and infidelity, we are confronting these same issues of sexuality and behavior. If I choose to stay monogamous with my husband, that does not change my sexuality, only my potential sexual behavior. If we decide on an open marriage and I sleep with lots of women, that doesn't change my sexuality either. More so than the gay and lesbian movement, the bisexual movement is in the crux of this issue because of the gap between the genders and the different "sexual orientations". While a straight married man might fall in love with another woman but never actually have an affair, or a lesbian might engage in non-monogamous relationships, bisexuality is still more illustrative to the average person of the essential difference between sex and sexuality.

If all people had a healthy sense of their sexuality, would people have sex more or less? I don't know, but I hope that young teenagers would have sex less and find some other, less potentially life-shattering rite of passage. Adults would be more aware of their sexual needs, perhaps quicker to seek professional help if things were seriously wrong, and couples who were in love but just not sexually compatible would be able to discuss their options, instead of creating discord by having secretive affairs. A healthy sense of sexuality would not solve all psychological problems, but that layer of self-awareness might make people a little calmer, a little more rational, a little more secure about themselves. That little bit could go a long way.

So the next time you are coming out to someone and have to explain that you are still bisexual even though you're dating a man, or, no, you're not a lesbian just because you're dating a woman, just think that you are contributing in a small way to world peace. Happy Coming Out!!!

Luscious Bi Resource Office Seeking Marvelous Volunteers for Mutual Appreciation

If you would like to volunteer a few hours per month to answer requests for information, mail out literature and do office tasks, please call the Bi Resource Office at (617)338-9595 and leave a message for Lisa, Laura or Wayne. Also seeking intrepid Volunteer Coordinator.

A Night to Remember

by Liz Nania

After months of eager and anxious preparation, the event was finally taking place. The rented room had been lovingly decorated with strings of tiny lights, candles and flowers. Soft music played as the guests entered, drank champagne and sparkling cider and admired each other's finery. Old friends and new approached the upcoming ritual with joyful anticipation and curiosity. The event turned out to be everything it was dreamed to be; perhaps it was "the happiest day of her life."

On October 15, 1993, (the date chosen for its proximity to National Coming Out Day), I celebrated the 10th anniversary of my coming out as bisexual. Yes, I flaunted it! For about ten years I had been longing for a splashy, exuberant and meaningful ritual to mark my adult life in some way. Weddings are usually the straight person's answer, and I've often felt envious of their celebrations. However, at this point in my life I've chosen not to have a wedding for political/feminist reasons, not to mention, lack of a suitable fiancé! But weddings are not just about romance, nuclear families, patriarchy or ownership; they're about hope. Weddings are two people's send-off to their dreams, their recognized passage into adulthood, blessed by their community. I believe in the value of sharing formal celebration, ritual, reflection and transformation with the people who are important in one's life. And as a bisexual person rooted firmly in the "queer" community, I'm angry that the world has deprived us of many potentially meaningful rites of passage which heterosexuals assume are their birthright.

So on Friday, October 15, 1993, I took matters into my own hands. I rented for the evening a small dance studio where I teach. Unfortunately, 80% of my guests are non-dancers — what a pity! — so I needed to set up the room for a seated affair rather than a dance party. I moved the ballet bars and created a triangular "corral," and two friends and I wrapped lavender and purple streamers and tiny white lights around the bars to create an intimate and magical little space. Inside the triangle I set up a long table and chairs, and we decorated the table in high style with a lavender tablecloth, gold paper lace placemats, matching paper dinnerware, lavender candles, and an extravagant flower arrangement in what could be interpreted as the "bi colors": pink, lavender and blue. I even put pastel jordan almonds in little lavender net bundles tied with gold curling ribbon at each plate; if I could have afforded engraved matchbooks, I would have! Not that

anyone would have smoked.

After my ten guests arrived (ten guests for a ten year anniversary) we enjoyed champagne, cider, camembert and soft music while milling about and chatting. Everyone looked beautiful! These were ten wonderful women in jackets, vintage dresses, bolos, boots, fancy suspenders, and whatever was each one's favorite finery. I wore a sapphire blue satin 40's dress, rhinestone earrings, and a rhinestone triangle brooch. We took plenty of pictures. Then we took our places inside the triangle seated at the table and I welcomed everyone with a toast to all of us: bisexual, lesbian and heterosexual.

I had bought myself a ring in Provincetown, a plain silver band with a pink triangular gem to celebrate my 10th anniversary, and I had been keeping it in its box until the night arrived. After the toast I read a statement to dedicate my ring and I passed it around the table to absorb everyone's good vibes before I put it on. My good friend Denise then suggested that since the guests didn't all know one another that each of us tell a little story of how they first got acquainted with me. I was touched; the stories were great.

We ate dinner, a delicious primarily vegetarian selection of prepared food I had bought at the local food co-op deli department. During the meal I played my favorite music on the dance studio's sound system, sizzling blues-based country swing and rock swing by no-nonsense female vocalists. After the meal I brought out a basket of gifts; on the invitations I had asked each participant to bring a wrapped gift to be randomly given to another guest. Each gift would be a small symbolic item, whether recycled, found, purchased or from nature, which would remind the recipient of her power and strength as a woman. After I walked around the table and handed each woman a gift, we opened them and were amazed at how perfect each gift turned out to be for the woman who received it. Soft and sensitive Denise received a small potted cactus Pam had brought to remind her that she needs to be tougher on the outside as a woman in the world. Aine brought a cholla (cactus) skeleton we had found together in the Arizona desert, and Pam (the original cactus-giver) ended up receiving it. Aine had found it on a journey where she was closest to her true self and hoped the recipient would be reminded to stay true to herself; Pam was also a lover of the earth and of travel, and she was (as are many of us) learning to listen to herself. Two of us, unbeknownst to each other, brought geodes with different meanings for the givers. A piece of one of the geodes sits on my desk here as I

A Night continues on next page

Call For Submissions

OPEN HEARTS: Stories of and by Responsibly Non-monogamous People

Responsible non-monogamy - sometimes referred to as polyamory - is the practice of being open to more than one romantic and/or sexual relationship at a time, and being honest about it with partners and/or potential partners.

Monogamous relationships can be wonderful - many people have honest, stable, egalitarian, and very fulfilling monogamous relationships.

But there are people - of all sexual orientations - who choose other types of relationships. These relationships come in many forms (i.e. polyfidelitous triads, open marriages, group marriages, intimate friendships, etc.) but have one thing in common. The people in these relationships have decided to be responsibly non-monogamous - to step outside the standard sexually and romantically fidelitous two-person relationship.

If you are one of these people, I want to hear from you! I am trying to bring together the stories of people like us for eventual publication in book form. For more information, contact me at: Bearpaw MacDonald, 325 Huntington Avenue #59, Boston, MA 02115. (or by email at: bearpaw@world.std.com)

Confidentiality will be respected. Contributions can be attributed anonymously or pseudonymously.



The Bisexual Resource Center is raising money to purchase a computer for the office to be used for expanding the International Directory of Bisexual Groups, maintaining the Bisexual Resource List, creating pamphlets, for the publishing of our very own *BiWomen* newsletter and more. We're already halfway there, but to make our \$2,500 goal we need your help, so please get that checkbook out today! Tax deductible donations can be made out to BRC and mailed to BRC Computer Fund, 95 Berkeley St. Suite 613, Boston, MA 02116.

BUTTONS

Bisexual Pride
Visi BI lity
Bisexual Queer



on sale at the Bi Office.

Send

\$1

plus a stamped, self-addressed envelope (or 50¢ postage and handling) to:

BBWN
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA
02140

9 to 5, an advocacy organization of working women, has just opened an office in Boston. For information on their work to fight sexual harassment, protect workers' rights, an other issues affecting working women, call (617)348-2970.

A Night, from preceding page

write this and always reminds me of Margaret's words (she was the giver) and that night. Denise brought her favorite mug, white with black pen-and-ink type drawings of strong Victorian-era women; her aunt had given it to her and she wanted the recipient to remember the power of the women before us and around us. Lucy brought a little bottle of shampoo from a hotel room in Atlantic City where we had spent a weekend in late spring after her lover had died; she said that weekend was the only moment of peace and joy she had experienced all year, and she wished the same for the recipient (who ended up being her ex-roommate Naomi).

Lucy, who had bought the flower arrangement, and my lover Mary had ordered a gorgeous cake from a superb but distant Suburban bakery. On the top was a big pink triangle cut from wide satin ribbon, and it was a lavishly-decorated carrot cake, my favorite. While we enjoyed our cake and coffee we took turns telling our coming out or "coming in" stories (the moment we had "come-in" to our own). It was such a powerful sharing experience. Lucy talked about belonging, Marnette and Chary Anne spoke about feminism, and the rest of us told wonderful coming out stories. Even though some of us had just met that evening there was an amazing connection that was created, and each story was received as a precious gift with rapt attention. That evening I learned so much about my dearest friends.

I closed the celebration with a poem my friend Aine had written called "Big Winged Bird," a poem about searching for freedom and peace. By the time we ended we had been

there for an astonishing seven hours. It was an experience I'll treasure always. For those of you who may question the transformative power of ritual, I'd like to include here an excerpt from my journal entry written three days later.

"Naomi called and said it was a 'landmark'. Margaret said they had been talking about it constantly and felt like a whole weekend had been lived, rather than just one evening. Denise said it was deeply emotional and strengthening and had changed her. Aine wrote me a most powerful letter about how inspired she was by these 'creative, complex women,' and the next day she did what she needed to do to be true to herself and she broke up with her partner. (She tried to tell him what it had meant to her and all he asked her was what we had for dinner!) Lucy said she felt she had been inside a triangle of safety, peace and happiness; that night I saw a piece of the "old Lucy", full of spirit, that I hadn't realized had been missing since her lover Donna died."

I'm sharing this experience with you so that you can begin to look at the power of ritual, commemoration and connection and know that we as bisexual, lesbian and gay people can have these valuable experiences for ourselves. Let your imagination run wild, browse in the bookstore for ideas, and brainstorm with friends. I was afraid my hip urban friends might think I was corny, or that I was asking too much of them, but this fear was unfounded. Therefore, the pre-celebration support, ideas and contributions of my friends Lucy and Marnette (who's a feminist minister and experienced with rituals) was invaluable and gave me confidence and momentum. May we all celebrate the growth and beauty of our richly varied lives. Happy Coming Out Day!

Vermont Bi Organizing Update

Written by Kirsten Isgro - the newly elected second NE BiNet Regional rep

On Saturday, November 12th, the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights sponsored their 2nd annual conference, entitled "A Queer Town Meeting." Over 500 people attended the day's events to affirm Vermont's vibrant lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Jill Merkel and I were invited to the conference by the planning committee to present a workshop on bisexuality!

Our Workshop, "Bisexual Visibility Within the Queer Community", provided an introduction of bisexual identity and an opportunity to share resources, information and to network. There were 35 people at our workshop. Many were bi-identified, some came as bi allies. I provided a working definition of bisexuality and discussed the radical nature of bisexuality as an

identity because it challenges dualistic thinking and acknowledges the diverse range of human sexuality. I also talked about the Klein study that broadens the definition of sexual orientation by looking not just at physical behavior, but also affectional orientation, sexual attraction, and sexual identity. Jill gave a brief history of the bi community in Burlington, Vermont, and showed a 15 minute excerpt from her ongoing bi video project.

There was a lot of discussion about bi identity and isolation. Many of the people who attended the workshop shared some of their own personal experiences and frustrations. We concluded the program by asking people to make a commitment to themselves as far as

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CALENDAR, from page 12

Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., (Central Sq.), Cambridge. Info: (617) 354-8807.

January 13 • Friday

BiWomen submissions deadline. Theme: How BBWN operates (submissions on all subjects welcome). Send calendar entries, essays, poems, art, ads, whatever, to: BiWomen, BBWN, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140.



January 14 • Saturday

BBWN Potluck Brunch. 11am. Come join us at Carla's in Jamaica Plain for bagels, banter and the best brunch in town. Call Carla for directions at 522-7432. All women welcome.

BIVERSITY Andover Coffee & Dessert, 8pm. Share good company and fabulous desserts with bi friends. Call Stephanie or Dwight at (508)474-9335 or send email to dae@world.com for directions.

January 16 • Monday

BiWomen volunteer night. 7:30-9pm. Read the mail, type articles, plan for future issues of the newsletter, make phone calls, chat with other bi women. Please join us!

January 17 • Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See December 7.

January 21 • Saturday

BIVERSITY Brunch, 11:30am at the Baja Cafe (note 1/2 hr. late starting time), 109 Dartmouth Street in Boston, about 1/2 block from Cafe Moka on the other side of the street. Nearest T stop is Back Bay on the Orange Line.

January 27 • Friday

BIVERSITY Movie Outing. Meet in front of the Harvard Square Theater in Cambridge at 6:30pm to decide what to see. Nearest T stop is Harvard Square on the Red Line.

January 29 • Sunday

BIVERSITY Brunch, 1:30pm at Mimi's at 950 Massachusetts Ave. in Cambridge. Nearest T stop is Central on the Red Line.

January 30 • Monday

BiWomen newsletter stuffing volunteer night. Share stories, meet other bi women, help get the newsletter out. The more who show up the faster it goes! 7-9pm.

February 5 • Sunday

Mark your calendars! The second Northeast Regional Bisexual Community Meeting will be held on Saturday, May 6, in Portland, Maine. We are just starting the process of organizing this event and need all the help we can get. The main themes we want to focus on are breaking down our isolation as bisexuals - especially in rural areas; bisexual visibility; and skills building/leadership development.

We are looking for folk who would be interested in advertising, outreach to your local communities, facilitating a workshop and just helping with the nuts and bolts of such a project. We can't do it without your help.

You can contact Kirsten Isgro at 802-658-9554 or Stephanie Berger at 617-666-3149 or via e-mail at virago@world.std.com

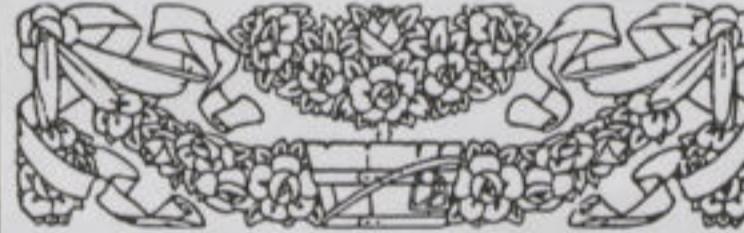
Vermont, from preceding page

what they would do next to increase bi visibility in their own lives. Jill talked about the informal Vermont Bisexual Network, BBWN, and BiNet.

Clearly people were grateful that bisexuality had been included in the Queer Town Meeting. It was a very important first step in the conversations that need to happen around bisexuality within the larger Vermont lesbian and gay community. It was also a significant first step for many folks coming out as bisexual either in the gay/lesbian or straight community. We're sending a thank you letter to the planning committee for inviting us to facilitate a workshop on the topic. Both Jill and I were excited about presenting and felt a lot of gratitude from many people in the workshop and at the conference that bisexuality was included in the day's agenda.

After the workshops, fashion show, and keynote by Jorjet Harper, the day concluded with a town meeting to address the next steps for the Coalition. As part of an ongoing debate, there was concern about the inclusive language in the coalition's name. In May 1994 the Coalition changed its name from the Coalition for Lesbians and Gay Men to the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights. This change clarified goals and reflected the desire to increase participation of all Vermonters who support gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered rights. The Coalition invited folks to join them to continue discussing the inclusiveness of all queers. We will keep you posted as to what comes of the title.

As a side note: The Vermont Bisexual Network is having a potluck on Saturday, December 10th at Jill's house at 4:00pm. For direction, more info and info on the Vermont Bisexual Network contact Jill Merkel at 802-496-9225.



Ongoing Events

(continued from p. 12)



Wednesdays:

Say It, Sister! radio show on WMBR 88.1 FM (first on your FM dial!). 7:30-8:30pm. Info and topics: (617) 253-8810.

3rd Thursdays

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau Meeting. 8pm at the Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St., 3rd floor. Wheelchair accessible. Near the Copley T stop, Green Line. Free, open to public. General meeting at 6:45pm with the theme program starting at 8pm. Info: (617) 354-0133.

Saturdays:

Lavender Country Dance Group. 8-11pm, beginners lesson 7:30. Smoke- and alcohol-free. Open to all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and their friends. First Church of Jamaica Plain, corner Centre and Eliot Sts., JP. On MBTA Green and Orange lines. \$5. Info: Janet, (617) 522-2216.

Every Other Saturday:

"Write with Women" 12:30-2:30 at the Women's Center in Cambridge. Short writings on personal topics in a friendly, positive atmosphere. Info: Women's Center at (617) 354-8807.

Dancin' the Night Away

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The Bi Office

is the Bisexual Resource Office, 95 Berkeley Street, Suite 613, Boston. (617) 338-9595

Ongoing Events

First Mondays:
Support Group for Anti-Racist White Women, 6:30-8:30pm at the Women's Theological Center, 140 Clarendon St., 6th fl., Boston. No charge, donation requested. Info: (617) 536-8782.

Fourth Mondays:
Women and Disability Think Tank. 7pm 4th Monday of every month, 282 Lamartine St, JP. Info: Connie Panzarino, Project on Women & Disability, 524-0921. Wheelchair accessible. ASL by request.

Tuesdays:
Bisexual Women's Rap Group. 7:30-9:30pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Central Square, Cambridge. All women welcome. Info, topics: (617) 354-8807.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Freedom Trail Band Rehearsals. Concert and marching band, no auditions. 7:30-9:30pm. Location and info: Kathy (617) 628-6219.

1st & 3rd Tuesdays:
Bisexual Issues Rap Group at the New Haven Women's Center, 614 Orange St., (corner Bishop) New Haven, Conn. Call to specify wheelchair access or ASL interpreting needs. Voice (203) 776-2658, TTY and voice (203) 397-2381.



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CALENDAR

December • Sunday

Bi Space. A friendly discussion space to meet other bisexuals and talk about bisexual issues. A \$2 donation is requested to help pay for rental of the space. BiSpace takes place 7-9pm on the first Sunday of each month at the Bi Office.



Info: (617) 338-9595.

December 8 • Thursday

Marge Garber, Harvard University professor and author of *Vested Interests: Cross Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* and the soon-to-be-released book *Vice-Versa* will talk on bisexuality and eroticism. 8pm, Frost Lounge, at Northeastern University. "Not to be Missed!!!" says BBWN activist/ co-founder Robyn Ochs.

December 10 • Saturday

Gender Free Dance. First Church of Jamaica Plain at the corner of Centre and Eliot streets. \$5 cover charge. Call Janet at (617) 522-2216 for info.

December 17 • Saturday

BIVERSITY Brunch, 11am at Thornton's at 100 Peterborough Street in Boston's Fenway. Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.



December 19 • Sunday

BBWN Potluck Brunch at Robyn's. Noon. Come share food, fun and join in the holiday season cheer. In the Central Square area of Cambridge (on the Red Line). Call Robyn at 495-8476 for directions.

December 20 • Tuesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. (Note this event is Tuesday, not Wednesday.) See December 7.

BIVERSITY is the Boston-area, mixed-gender, multicultural bisexual network. For more info call the Bi Office at (617) 338-9595.

December 23 • Friday

BIVERSITY Bi Club Night at Quest, 1270 Boylston St. in Boston. (No cover before 10pm.) Nearest T stop is Fenway on the D branch of the Green Line.

December 25 • Sunday

BIVERSITY Potluck Brunch. Arrive anytime after noon to eat at 1pm. Call Linda or Stephanie at (617) 282-3537 or send email to: thespian@netcom.com for directions.



January 1 • Sunday

Bi Space. See December 4.

January 4 • Wednesday

Coming Out as Bisexual. See December 7.

January 7 • Saturday

BIVERSITY Scandalously Late Sushi at 11pm at Ginza, 14 Hudson Street in Boston's Chinatown (near the Chinatown arch). For those not into sushi, Ginza has a very broad menu. Nearest T stops are Chinatown on the Orange Line and South Station on the Red Line.

January 11 • Wednesday

BBWN Introductory Meeting. A safe place for women to connect with the bi community. 7:30-9pm at the

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